App. F. IX-4

Previous References

1930-31
(P.P.)

File No. 118-30

Serial Nos. /

Later References

P. 201

General and Revenue Secretariat.

Serial

Part B for April 1931

SUBJECT.

Parliamentary Debates relating to the Indian Round Table Conference in the House of Commons on 26th January 1931.

Submitted to His Highness.

I submit, for the gracious perusal of His Highness, the Parliamentary Debates relating to the Indian Round Table Conference in the House of Commons on the 26th January 1931. I beg to invite particular reference to that part of Sir John Simon's speech on page 677, where he makes mention of Mysore in complimentary terms.

Mirza M. Ismail

Bangalore,)
16th March 1931.)

D E W A N.

Record of Cases submitted for the Orders of His Highness the Maharaja.

Subject.

Parliamentary Debates relating to the Indian Round Table Conference in the House of Commons on 26th January 1931.

NO 507

Order.

~~KRW~~
13/4/31

P. Ley
Mr
15-4-31

Parliamentary debates relating to the Indian Round Table Conference in the House of Commons on 26th January 1931

(*)

31. All urgent or confidential files returned with His Highness' orders may in the absence of instructions or indications to the contrary, be ordinarily circulated to the Members of Council for perusal after the issue of orders.

33. The Secretaries concerned should see that orders in the cases referred to above are issued at once and that the files are returned immediately after to the Chief Secretary for circulation to the Members.

34. In all other cases, the files will first be circulated to the members of Council at Headquarters and then sent to the Secretariat concerned for the issue of orders.

Circulated to Members of Council for perusal of His Highness' orders before/after issue of orders.* (*Vide* Rules 31, 33 and 34 of the Subsidiary Rules for the conduct of business of Council in the Manual of Council Rules and Procedure.)

Chief Secretary to Government.

Through the Secretary to Government,

.....Department.

1183
12/4

FIRST MEMBER OF COUNCIL. 7 Jan. 1931

SECOND MEMBER OF COUNCIL. (on leave

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THIRD MEMBER OF COUNCIL. 16/4/31

C.B.

NOTE.—Contn. sheet.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 26th January, 1931.

[OFFICIAL REPORT.]

The House met at a Quarter before Three of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

STANDING ORDERS.

The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS (Sir Robert Young): I beg to move,

"That the Amendments to Standing Orders relating to Private Business as set out in the Schedule attached hereto, be approved by this House."

SCHEDULE.

Standing Order 25, line 11, leave out "in England."

Line 15, leave out "in England."

Standing Order 32, line 4, leave out "in England or Wales."

Standing Order 36, lines 15 and 16, leave out "in England or Wales."

Lines 18 and 19, leave out "in England or Wales."

Line 22, leave out "in England or Wales."

Line 27, leave out "in England or Wales."

Standing Order 45, line 7, leave out "in England or Wales."

Standing Order 68, line 3, leave out "Paymaster General," and insert "Accountant General."

Standing Order 69, line 6, leave out "or Standing Order 275."

Standing Order 111, line 8, leave out "two," and insert "and three."

Standing Order 149, lines 3 and 4, leave out "sworn as aforesaid."

Standing Order 166, line 39, leave out "Paymaster General," and insert "Accountant General."

Standing Order 206, lines 9 and 10, leave out "the declaration and," and insert "a."

Standing Order 275, line 16, leave out from "deposited," to "in," in line 20.

Appendix A, line 20, after "Councils," insert "Town Clerks of County Boroughs."

Line 22, after the first "Councils," insert "or County Boroughs."

Line 22, after the second "Counties," insert "or County Boroughs."

These are purely drafting Amendments to round off what was done in July. They are proposed as the result of a committee presided over by the Deputy-Chairman, and copies have been sent to members of the committee, by whom no objection has been made.

Question put, and agreed to.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

INDIA.

SITUATION.

1. **Major GRAHAM POLE** asked the Secretary of State for India whether he can make a statement as to the present state of affairs in India?

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. Wedgwood Benn): I am circulating a statement giving the Government of India's appreciation of the situation for the week ending 24th January.

Following is the statement:

Appreciation of the situation by the Government of India up to 25th January, 1931.

The declaration of policy made by the Prime Minister on 19th January has outshadowed all other events, and the attention of India is directed towards his announcement and its effects on the internal situation. In these circumstances, this appreciation is confined to this aspect of the week's happenings.

Except in some quarters the announcement has received a good press, and moderate opinion generally recognises the fact that the statement of the intentions of His Majesty's Government has created a new situation in which all parties can co-operate in order to bring to fulfilment a new constitution. The Nationalist party in the Legislative Assembly have accepted the statement of policy as welcome and gratifying, and approve of the principles underlying it subject to further considerations, after details are evolved regarding precise form and structure of new Government. They urge a general political amnesty, and appeal to Congress leaders to co-operate and unite with rest of country in securing such modifications and improvements as may be found necessary.

[Mr. Benn.]

Muslim members of Assembly acknowledge efforts of His Majesty's Government to meet, in full, the political aspirations of India, and accept necessity of certain safeguards during period of transition. They approve, in particular, of the Prime Minister's announcement regarding guarantees for protection of political liberties and rights of minorities, and ask that, failing an agreement between communities, His Majesty's Government should take special care that guarantees are substantive and effective. They appeal to all communities to secure a settlement by consent. They urge an amnesty, and, in particular, release of particular leaders, in order that maximum of good will and co-operation may be obtained in the evolution of new constitution.

Other important interests in country have followed much same line.

A meeting of the Working Committee of All-India Congress was held during week to consider announcement, but in deference to a message received from Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Messrs. Sastri and Jayakar, Committee have suspended publication of the resolution they had passed until the delegates return to India. They have announced, that, in the meantime, Civil Disobedience Movement is to continue.

In order that Congress leaders may have the fullest opportunity of examining the new situation created by announcement, and of reaching conclusions regarding their attitude towards further discussions of constitutional problems that will necessarily take place, Government have released those members of the Working Committee of All-India Congress who are undergoing imprisonment, and also those who have acted as members of Committee since 1st January, 1930. No conditions have been imposed on release, and the Viceroy, in a statement issued on 25th January, has made it clear that action has been taken in pursuance of the desire that such peaceful conditions will be created as will enable Government to implement the undertaking given by the Prime Minister that, if civil quiet were proclaimed and assured, Government would not be backward in response.

MEERUT TRIAL.

4. **Commander SOUTHBY** asked the Secretary of State for India when the Meerut conspiracy case trial is likely to be concluded; what has been the total expenditure from public funds upon this trial up to date; whether the cost of conveying witnesses from this country to India has been borne by the British Exchequer or the Government of India; how many counsel have been employed for the prosecution and how many for the defence; and what emoluments have been or will be received in connection with this trial by the Crown prosecutor?

Mr. BENN: The answer to the first part of the question is that it is hoped that the trial will conclude in April, leaving only the preparation of the judgment. To the second part, approximately seven lakhs to the end of last year. To the third part, the cost is borne from Indian Revenues. To the fourth part, at present two for the Crown and two for the defence. To the fifth part, Rs.1,020 and Rs.85 respectively per diem.

Commander SOUTHBY: Have any of the prisoners been released owing to ill-health?

Mr. BENN: There was a case of ill-health, and I think the prisoner was removed to the civil prison hospital. I should like to give a detailed reply, if the hon. and gallant Gentleman will give me notice.

POLICE (MILITARY ASSISTANCE).

5. **Mr. CAMPBELL** asked the Secretary of State for India how many times a military force or detachment was used to assist the police in India during the year 1930; is he aware that the military consider this an unwelcome duty; and will he tell the House what steps he intends taking to strengthen the police force?

Mr. BENN: Troops were employed on 10 occasions to assist the police during 1930. There has throughout been the closest co-operation between the civil and military authorities and assistance has been willingly given by the military forces. As regards the third part, additions to the police forces have already been made in nearly all provinces.

PRISONERS RELEASE.

8. **Mr. FREEMAN** asked the Secretary of State for India whether he has received any information that any steps have been taken by the National Congress, or whether the Government contemplates taking any action, to secure an understanding for the calling off of the civil disobedience campaign and the release of political prisoners?

Mr. BENN: To allow full facilities for discussion of the Prime Minister's statement at the concluding session of the Round Table Conference, it has been decided to release unconditionally Mr. Gandhi and the permanent and officiating members of the All India Congress Working Committee who have held office since 1st January, 1930.

Mr. HANNON: Is any condition attached to the release of the prisoners?

Mr. BENN: The full announcement was made by the Viceroy yesterday, and I would refer the hon. Member to the terms of it.

Mr. WARDLAW-MILNE: Will the right hon. Gentleman let the House know exactly the number of people?

Mr. BENN: So soon as I have the information I shall be glad to give it to the House.

Earl WINTERTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman likely to have it before the conclusion of the Debate to-day?

Mr. BENN: No, Sir.

Mr. AYLES: Is any action contemplated in regard to the other prisoners?

Mr. BENN: I cannot say anything about that.

Mr. FREEMAN: Will the ordinances be repealed at the same time, particularly relating to the Press, in view of the desirability of having our public opinion crystallised on the matter?

Mr. BENN: At this moment I am not able to give any further information than that contained in the Viceroy's statement.

CONFERENCE.

45. **Mr. W. J. BROWN** asked the Prime Minister, in view of the telegram sent to him before the opening of the Round Table Conference from the General Council of All Burmese Associations regarding the Conference and the recommendations of the Simon Report in reference to the separation of Burma from India, why its terms were not placed before the members of the Round Table Conference; and whether he will communicate its terms to the House?

Mr. BENN: I have been asked to reply. The telegram in question is presumably one dated 14th October which I am circulating in the OFFICIAL REPORT. There was no reason to single out this particular telegram and to place it before the Conference in preference to one received in August urging an immediate declaration of separation, and the scores of others received from Burma during the Conference, some supporting and some opposing separation.

Mr. BROWN: May I ask what steps the Government took to ascertain the views of Burma upon the subject, as apart from the views of the single representative of Burma at the Round Table Conference, before coming to this decision?

Mr. BENN: There was a mass of material relating to this question before the Round Table Conference; and there was more than one representative of Burma.

Mr. FREEMAN: Before the matter is finally settled will there be a further opportunity of considering the wishes of Burma itself?

Lieut.-Commander KENWORTHY: Is there anything to prevent Burma refederating with India if she so desires?

Mr. BENN: The Government policy is as stated in my answer on Tuesday last.

Following is the telegram:

"Burma Legislative Councillors being not true representatives, their separation resolution is not country's verdict. Government-chosen Burma delegates to Round Table Conference represent only Local Government. This Council condemns Simon Report *in toto*, particularly immediate separation. This Council will not accept any scheme of Government which does not satisfy majority of masses, whose declared ultimate goal is independence.

(Sd.) SO THEIN, Chairman,
General Council of all
Burmese Associations."

AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN DEBT (BRITISH INVESTORS).

9 and 10. **Mr. REMER** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, (1) if he will request His Majesty's Ministers at Vienna and Budapest to draw up a report explaining the effect upon the position of British holders of pre-War Austro-Hungarian unsecured debt arising from the non-ratification of certain States of the 31st October, 1930, agreement: and will he give the names of these States which have failed to ratify;

(2) whether he will instruct His Majesty's representatives abroad to assist in obtaining the ratification by certain States of the Austro-Hungarian debt settlement agreement of 31st October, 1930, made by the Caisse Commune on behalf of British investors?

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Mr. Dalton): The agreement of 31st October, 1930, has been ratified by all the States concerned except Yugoslavia and Hungary. On 13th December last, however, an additional agreement was signed by all the interested States, under the terms of which the agreement of 31st October will be put into force as from 1st January, 1931, until 1st January, 1936, and will remain permanently in force if Yugoslavia and Hungary ratify before the latter date. Earlier ratification by Yugoslavia and Hungary of the first agreement would render the second superfluous. In these circumstances no action in the sense suggested by the hon. Member seems required.

Mr. ARTHUR MICHAEL SAMUEL: Is there any reason why Hungary and Yugoslavia have refused to ratify?

Mr. DALTON: I could not say without notice.

BRITISH SUBJECTS, UNITED STATES (DEPORTATIONS).

11. **Sir NICHOLAS GRATTAN-DOYLE** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has made any protest to the Government of the United States of America against the treatment meted out to British citizens selected for deportation from the United States of America; and, if so, what has been the reply?

Mr. DALTON: A number of complaints have been received from time to time regarding the treatment of British subjects awaiting deportation from the United States. Usually such complaints form the subject of representations by His Majesty's Consular Officers to the local immigration authorities. His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington has also recently brought certain aspects of this question to the notice of the State Department. My right hon. Friend is confident that the United States authorities will give full consideration to the representations which have been made.

Sir N. GRATTAN-DOYLE: Has any reply been received to the representations made some time ago on the subject?

Mr. DALTON: We are frequently getting reports on particular cases taken up by our representatives in the United States. The Memorandum from the Ambassador to the State Department was submitted quite recently and he has not yet had a reply.

12. **Captain PETER MACDONALD** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any information concerning the case of Mr. S. P. Eaden, who was recently deported from the United States of America to this country after living for more than 20 years in the United States; whether he has made any protest to the Government of the United States of America in regard to the treatment of Mr. Eaden; and, if so, what has been the reply?

Mr. DALTON: This case has been carefully examined, and I shall be glad to furnish the hon. and gallant Member with full particulars. There are, I fear, no grounds on which representations on behalf of Mr. Eaden could be made to the United States Government.

Captain MACDONALD: Has any reason been given by the United States Government for the deportation of this and other British subjects?

Mr. DALTON: I think it would be in the best interests of Mr. Eaden if the hon. and gallant Member and I had a private conversation about it.

RUSSIA.

PROPAGANDA.

13. **Commander BELLAIRS** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in order to enable the House to judge of the identity between the Government in Soviet Russia, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, and the Executive Committee of the Third International in relation to propagandist activities, whether he will state what Members of the Government hold positions in the two latter bodies?

22. **Mr. SMITHERS** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can tell the House the names of those members of the Soviet Government who are also members of the governing body of the Comintern?

Mr. DALTON: As the answer is rather long, I will, with the hon. Members' permission, circulate it in the OFFICIAL REPORT.

Following is the answer:

Certain members of the Political Bureau of the Russian Communist Party are members of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union, to which I presume the hon. Members refer in their inquiry respecting the Soviet Government. Other members of the Political Bureau, though not members of the Council of People's Commissars, hold positions in other organs of the Soviet Government. So far as can be ascertained from the latest officially notified appointments, the following members and substitute member of the Political Bureau are either members of the Council of People's Commissars or hold positions in organs of the Soviet Government (other than the Central Executive Committee), as set forth below:

Members of Council of People's Commissars and of the Political Bureau:

M. V. M. Molotov, President of the Council of People's Commissars.
M. V. V. Kuibyshev, Vice-President of the Council of People's Commissars.
M. K. E. Voroshilov, Commissar of War and Marine.

Member of Council of People's Commissars and Substitute Member of Political Bureau:

M. A. I. Mokoyan, Commissar of Supply.

Members of the Political Bureau holding positions other than Posts in the Council of People's Commissars:

M. S. Z. Ruduzutak, Vice-President of the Council of Labour and Defence.
M. I. V. Stalin, Member of the Council of Labour and Defence.
M. G. K. Ordzhonikidze, President of the Supreme Council of National Economy, Member of the Council of Labour and Defence.

As regards the Third International, I understand that Messrs. Molotov and Stalin were till recently included among the Russian members of the Executive Committee, but I am not aware whether they are still members or not.

Mr. SMITHERS: Are the names more or less the same for the two bodies?

Mr. DALTON: The names are all given in the rather long answer which I am suggesting should be circulated. It would take some time to read. There are certain names on both. The question is a little complicated, and I think it would be better to leave it there. If the hon. Member is not satisfied, he can put down another question.

Mr. SMITHERS: Roughly, what is the percentage of names on both bodies?

Mr. DALTON: I have only been asked to give the names on both bodies. If the hon. Member wants to know the percentage of names on both, perhaps, having read the answer, he will put down another question.

14. **Sir KINGSLEY WOOD** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the instructions recently published in "Izvestia," the official organ of the Soviet Government, of the Comintern to its sections in London, Paris, and other European capitals, requesting them to establish fresh bases among British and French soldiers, sailors, and workers in munition factories, to unmask the British and French General Staffs, and to persuade such soldiers and others that the British and French Governments are engaged in a conspiracy to make war on Russia; and whether he is taking any action in the matter?

Mr. DALTON: Reports appeared in the Soviet Press in December last outlining certain resolutions adopted by the

[Mr. Dalton.]
Executive Committee of the Red International of Trade Unions, commonly called the Profintern. It is probably to these reports that the right hon. Gentleman refers. The matter is being carefully watched.

Sir K. WOOD: Are the Government going to take any action? Is not this a direct breach of the pledge as far as propaganda is concerned?

Mr. MILLS: Will the hon. Gentleman give special consideration to these nonsensical references that are continually being made by Conservative Members in the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: To use an adjective such as the hon. Member has done about another hon. Member's question is quite out of order.

Colonel ASHLEY: Is it not the custom to give a reply to a courteous question by a member of the Front Opposition Bench?

Mr. DALTON: I was prepared to reply without the assistance of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman. Had he not risen, I was about to rise myself. We are carefully watching the matter, and, if any action should result, we shall naturally consider whether we on our side should take any action. At present no action has taken place. All we are confronted with are certain verbose and somewhat ridiculous resolutions passed by this body.

Sir AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Has the hon. Gentleman considered whether these resolutions are in accord with the engagements which His Majesty's Government required of the Soviet Government as a condition of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations?

Mr. DALTON: The question of the relation of the Soviet Government to the Profitern has not so often been raised as that of the Comintern and other organisations within the Soviet Union. I think my right hon. Friend made a reply on the subject of the Profitern some little while ago, but we have only once previously had this point raised in the House in connection with that body. Perhaps I might leave it there for the moment with the assurance that we are watching any possible developments.

Sir K. WOOD: Will the hon. Gentleman kindly reply to the question which I put? Apart altogether from the resolutions of this body, is not the publication of these resolutions an infringement of the undertaking of the Soviet Government?

Mr. ERNEST WINTERTON: Are not many of these questions an infringement of the friendly understanding between the two countries?

Commander OLIVER LOCKER-LAMPSON: How much longer are we going to be stabbed in the back?

PUBLIC PROSECUTOR'S COMMENTS (BRITISH PROTEST).

16. **Sir K. WOOD** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has now given further consideration to the references, direct and indirect, to the British Government and British subjects in the judgment of the court which recently tried certain industrialists in Moscow; and if he is taking any action?

Mr. DALTON: I have nothing to add to my reply of the 19th of December to a similar question by the right hon. Gentleman.

Sir K. WOOD: Does not the hon. Gentleman recall that his right hon. Friend was going to consider these references by the judgment of the Court; does he deny that they were made; and will he state whether he is going to take any action in the matter?

Mr. DALTON: If the right hon. Gentleman will read again the answer which was given on 19th December, he will find that my right hon. Friend, having carefully considered the question, having made his protest, and having expressed his dissatisfaction with the Soviet reply, was disinclined to carry the matter any further.

Sir K. WOOD: Does not the hon. Gentleman recall that the protests that were made concerned the speeches for the prosecution? I am now asking whether the Government are going to take any action in regard to a much more serious thing, namely, the references to this country in the judgment of the Court?

HON. MEMBERS: Answer.

DEBTS, CLAIMS AND COUNTER CLAIMS.

20. **Captain P. MACDONALD** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

the names of the chairmen and other members of the sub-committees appointed by the Anglo-Russian Debt Commission; and what the terms of reference of these committees are to be?

Mr. DALTON: The general scope of sub-committees A, B, C, and D, has already been stated in my right hon. Friend's reply to the hon. and gallant Member on the 14th of July, 1930. Since that date arrangements have been made for two additional sub-committees, E and F, which will deal chiefly with Governmental and private claims arising out of events subsequent to November, 1917. In both these sub-committees the Soviet claims are brought against the British Government. The British membership, therefore, as in the case of sub-committee D, will be purely of an official character. Sir F. Leith Ross will in each case act as Chairman of the British Delegation. The following are the nemes of the Chairmen and members of the British Delegation in sub-committees A, B and C, as now constituted:

Sub-Committee A:
Sir J. Dewrance (Chairman).
Sir W. Max Muller.
Mr. H. G. Trew.
Mr. J. A. Clark.

Sub-Committee B:
Lord Goschen (Chairman).
Mr. H. A. Trotter.
Mr. G. S. Pawle.

Sub-Committee C:
Mr. C. T. Cramp (Chairman).
Mr. H. G. Trew.
Mr. G. Tyser.
Mr. N. Buchanan.

Mr. MARJORIBANKS: What will the hon. Gentleman do if all the letters of the alphabet are exhausted?

LABOUR CONDITIONS.

24. **Sir WILLIAM DAVISON** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what reply has been received from His Majesty's Ambassador in Moscow with regard to the British Government's request for information as to the allegations of forced labour obtaining in Russian timber camps and the general conditions obtaining in such camps?

Mr. DALTON: M. Litvinoff has stated to His Majesty's Ambassador in Moscow that no official request for an investigation could be considered by the Soviet Government any more than would a similar request be considered by His Majesty's Government, and that convicts are employed in the Soviet Union, as in other countries, on work such as road building, a matter which solely concerns the Soviet Government. His Majesty's Ambassador has also been informed by the Soviet authorities that neither prison labour, nor, in general, the labour of sentenced persons, is employed in the branches of the timber industry which produce for export, including the work at ports.

Sir W. DAVISON: Will the Soviet Government give facilities and freedom to visit these camps and full information to a representative of our Embassy in Moscow, or other official representative, and also to examine the system of loading our ships in the Baltic?

Mr. W. J. BROWN: Can my hon. Friend say whether, if such a demand is to be pressed, our own Government propose to concede similar facilities to the Russian Government in respect of this country?

Mr. DALTON: At the present moment I cannot add anything to the reply which I have given. My right hon. Friend has caused His Majesty's Government's representative in Moscow to make this inquiry of M. Litvinoff, and the purport of the inquiry I have reported to the House. M. Litvinoff raises the point which my hon. Friend has put, that any proposal of this sort must be treated in the same way as a counter proposal to this country would be treated.

Mr. BROWN: Can my hon. Friend say whether, in the event of any further questions of this kind being put upon the Paper, the Foreign Secretary, or his Under-Secretary, will make it categorically clear that he does not propose to have his time so occupied?

Sir W. DAVISON: Will the Foreign Office say that we welcome any inquiry of the kind in this country as long as we have full facilities in Russia?

Mr. DALTON: Such a statement would be quite outside the functions of the Foreign Office.

25. **Commander LOCKER-LAMPSON** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the Government's inability to commit itself to an examination of alleged convict conditions of labour in Russia, he will invite the League of Nations to approach the Union of Soviet Republics and offer to undertake this work?

Mr. DALTON: This suggestion has been communicated to my right hon. Friend who has made inquiries and finds that there is no precedent for the course suggested. In his opinion it is altogether undesirable that the League should be associated with any inquiry such as that suggested in the territory of a non-member State, except at the request of that State.

Commander LOCKER-LAMPSON: Is is not a fact that an analogy exists in the case of Liberia where slave conditions were examined by the League of Nations?

Mr. DALTON: That inquiry was made at the request of Liberia, which is a member of the League.

Commander LOCKER - LAMPSON: Will the Government invite the Soviet Government of Russia to invite the League of Nations to make the inquiry?

Mr. MARJORIBANKS: Is this the way that the Government abolish slavery?

27. **Commander BELLAIRS** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is now in a position to state whether the White Paper on labour conditions in Russia will include Circular 87 of the All-Union Commissariat of Labour of 4th March, 1930, for the raising of conscript labour gangs from collective farms for timber cutting, and the regulations of the Soviet Commissariat of Labour published in the official journal of the Soviet Republic, "Izvestia," on 5th November, 1930?

Mr. DALTON: Yes, Sir. Both the ordinances to which the hon. and gallant Member refers are included in the White Paper.

Mr. McSHANE: Is the Under-Secretary aware that the circular makes no reference to conscript labour gangs?

Mr. DALTON: I said that the circulars to which the hon. and gallant Member referred were given in the White Paper. Whether their contents are exactly what certain hon. Members consider them to be, is another matter.

Mr. ANNESLEY SOMERVILLE: Will the White Paper include a statement as to the convict labour used for loading timber ships at Archangel?

Mr. DALTON: Without reference to some particular ordinance I cannot say, but the White Paper will be out in a few days, and we hope to publish all the relevant decrees and ordinances that we think will be of interest to the House.

36. **Commander BELLAIRS** asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department, with reference to his answer on 18th March that he would consider the question of raising the issue of the conditions of labour in exports, such as are produced in the Soviet Russian timber trade, at the League of Nations, if he will state what decision has been arrived at?

Mr. GILLETT (Secretary, Overseas Trade Department): His Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that no useful purpose would be served by referring the matter to the League of Nations.

Commander BELLAIRS: Is the hon. Gentleman aware of any other nation that has raised this important question?

Mr. GILLETT: No, Sir.

75. **Mr. SMITHERS** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the regulations decreed by the commissariat of labour of the Soviet Government, published in "Izvestia" of the 5th November, 1930; and, in view of the fact that the object of this decree is the definite establishment of compulsory labour, will the Government reconsider its decision and prohibit the importation of goods so produced?

Mr. GILLETT: The attention of my right hon. Friend has been called to the regulations in question, which deal with the organisation of the supply of labour to the various industries in the Soviet Union. As has been stated in this House on many occasions, His Majesty's Government are not prepared to initiate legislation of the kind suggested in the second part of the question.

Mr. SMITHERS: Will the hon. Gentleman, at his leisure, try to reconcile that answer with the answer given by the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs earlier in the afternoon?

ABYSSINIA (CORONATION CEREMONY).

15. **Mr. REMER** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what was the cost to the British Exchequer of the state visit to Abyssinia at the recent coronation; and if he has received advices that the good feeling between Abyssinia and the British Empire has been improved thereby?

Mr. DALTON: The accounts of the Duke of Gloucester's Mission to Abyssinia are not yet complete, and it is, therefore, not possible to give the final figures of the cost, but it is estimated that it will be approximately £3,900. My right hon. Friend has every reason to hope that the visit of this Mission to Abyssinia will have strengthened the friendly relations existing between His Majesty's Government and the Government of Abyssinia. It will be recalled that the present Emperor of Abyssinia paid an official visit to this country some years ago.

Mr. REMER: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the present Emperor of Abyssinia is trying by all the means possible to give orders to foreign countries instead of to this country?

Mr. DALTON: No, Sir; I am not aware of that fact.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

DISARMAMENT.

17. **Mr. AYLES** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can make a statement upon the policy of the Government at the forthcoming General Disarmament Conference in relation to the question of giving guarantees of military assistance to nations that are attacked in return for a general measure of disarmament?

Mr. DALTON: My hon. Friend will not expect me to forecast at this distance of time the exact policy which His Majesty's Government may adopt at the Conference. This country is, of course, bound by certain obligations under the Covenant of the League, and I need hardly add that His Majesty's Government have not the slightest intention of evading them.

Mr. AYLES: Can my hon. Friend say, whether, when the representative of His Majesty's Government at Geneva at the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament—Lord Cecil—stated at the end of December that at the next Conference we may have to give guarantees of this character in order to secure general disarmament, he was speaking on behalf of the Government or on behalf of himself?

Mr. DALTON: I do not recall any such statement by Lord Cecil at the Preparatory Commission.

Mr. AYLES: It was broadcast in December.

Mr. DALTON: But the answer to the question on the Paper is as I have given it.

CONTRIBUTIONS.

19. **Mr. CULVERWELL** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what was the amount contributed by each country to the expenses of the League of Nations during the last financial year?

Mr. DALTON: As the answer contains a number of figures, I will circulate it in the OFFICIAL REPORT.

Mr. HANNON: Will the hon. Gentleman be good enough to tell the House whether in those figures there is not a larger proportion paid towards the cost of the League of Nations by this country than by any other country?

Mr. DALTON: Yes, Sir; that must be so in any statement of figures regarding these contributions, but that has been so ever since the League of Nations was founded, and the sum is a very small one indeed compared with many other sums paid by the British taxpayer.

Mr. WINTERTON: Is it not a fact that the last War cost this nation more than any other nation?

Mr. DALTON: Yes, Sir.

Following is the answer:

According to the latest returns the following payments have been made in respect of the yar 1930, but the final figures for the year are not yet available:

	Gold francs.
Abyssinia (entire contribution)	55,914.09
Australia (on account) ...	611,334.89
Austria (entire contribution)	224,731.58
Belgium (entire contribution)	491,195.72
Canada (entire contribution)	954,776.51
Colombia (on account) ...	44,321.70
Czechoslovakia (entire contribution)	792,543.58
Denmark (entire contribution)	326,496.02
Estonia (on account)	61,844.54
Finland (on account) ...	205,507.71
France (on account)	1,637,547.—
Germany (entire contribution)	2,227,110.01
Great Britain (entire contribution)	2,900,767.72
Greece (entire contribution)	189,854.91
Haiti (entire contribution) ...	25,547.98
Hungary (on account)... ...	166,606.89
India (entire contribution) ...	1,532,865.20
Irish Free State (on account)	209,677.62
Italy (on account)	1,235,232.22
Japan (on account)	1,521,565.85
Latvia (entire contribution)	82,005.40
Liberia (on account)	24,458.39
Lithuania (on account) ...	27,545.52
Luxemburg (entire contribution)	26,552.—
Netherlands (entire contribution)	629,732.30
New Zealand (entire contribution)	275,279.74
Nicaragua (on account) ...	4,670.45
Norway (entire contribution)	242,523.56
Poland (on account)	668,082.45
Portugal (entire contribution)	158,785.88
Roumania (entire contribution)	596,921.81
Spain (entire contribution) ...	1,096,318.05
Siam (entire contribution) ...	247,088.47
South Africa (entire contribution)	403,598.96
Sweden (entire contribution)	489,743.85
Switzerland (entire contribution)	463,004.48
Venezuela (entire contribution)	136,743.22
Yugoslavia (entire contribution)	545,368.68

MEXICO (BRITISH INVESTORS).

18. **Mr. LESLIE BOYCE** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the fact that the Mexican Congress has adjourned without ratifying the external debt agreement, he will request His Majesty's Minister in Mexico to protest against this further delay in ratification so far as it affects British subjects?

Mr. DALTON: The International Committee of Bankers, who are the qualified agents of the bondholders, and, as such, effected the agreement in question, are still in negotiation with the Mexican Government. They have not appealed to His Majesty's Government for any assistance, and, in these circumstances, my right hon. Friend does not consider that it would serve the interests of the British bondholders at the present time to take the action suggested by the hon. Member.

Mr. SMITHERS: Will the hon. Gentleman communicate with this committee of bankers and ask them to issue an interim report of the present position?

Mr. DALTON: We are in touch with them, and we are able to co-operate in every practical way.

Mr. SMITHERS: Will the hon. Gentleman publish a report?

Mr. DALTON: The International Committee of Bankers are still engaged in negotiations with the Mexican Government, and, if in their view publication is desirable, there are means by which we can come to an agreement upon the matter. We do not want to press them to publish something which might defeat the object in view.

21. **Mr. OSWALD LEWIS** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Mexican Congress has yet ratified the agreement arrived at last year by which the 17-year-old default of Mexican Government obligations may be terminated; and, if ratification has not taken place, will he state whether any payments were made by the Mexican Government on 1st January, 1931, on account of what is due to British holders of the defaulted direct obligations of the Mexican Government?

Mr. DALTON: The answers to both parts of the question are in the negative, although I understand that further negotiations are taking place between the International Committee of Bankers and the Mexican Government on the subject.

CHINESE RAILWAY BONDS (BRITISH HOLDERS).

23. **Mr. A. M. SAMUEL** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is now in a position to make a statement about the default of the Chinese Government in its obligations to British holders of Chinese railway bonds, including those of the Hu-kuang, the Tientsin Pukow, the Lung-tsing-u-hai, and the Canton Kowloon railways?

Mr. DALTON: Proposals having for their general object the liquidation of outstanding debts were submitted by the Chinese Government at the conference held at Nanking with the British and other diplomatic representatives in China in November last. These proposals are now being considered, and Sir Miles Lampson has circularised all British creditors with a view to obtaining a full list of their claims against the Chinese Government.

Mr. SAMUEL: Will the hon. Gentleman, before the Chinese Indemnity Bill becomes law, warn the Chinese Government that it will be very difficult for them to raise money here again by loan or borrowing for railway equipment unless and until they fulfil their earlier obligations to British holders of Chinese bonds issued in the past?

Mr. DALTON: We will bear that suggestion in mind.

Sir W. DAVISON: Will the Foreign Office see that the £3,000,000 under the Boxer Indemnity is not parted with by us until such time as the Chinese Government have fulfilled their obligation to British bondholders?

Mr. DALTON: We had a debate on the China Indemnity Bill the other day, and I do not remember that point being put officially on behalf of the party opposite.

Mr. SAMUEL: Does not the hon. Gentleman remember that during the debate on the Bill when the President of the Board of Trade read a letter to the House I specifically put that point to the President of the Board of Trade, and that he asked me to put down a question about it? That is the reason for this question.

Sir W. DAVISON: Surely, if the point is a good point, whether it is put officially or not, it ought to be attended to, as the Foreign Office represent the country as a whole, and especially British bondholders.

NAVAL AND MILITARY PENSIONS AND GRANTS.

KIRKBURTON MENTAL HOSPITAL.

28. **Major COHEN** asked the Minister of Pensions whether there is any possibility of the Kirkburton Mental Hospital being required by the West Riding authorities; and, if so, whether he will give an assurance that the pensioner patients at present in that hospital will not be returned to county mental institutions, but will be transferred to a Ministry institution where they will receive treatment exactly similar to that now being given at Kirkburton?

Mr. WILFRID PALING (Lord of the Treasury): In the unavoidable absence of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Pensions I have been asked to reply. The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. The policy of the Ministry as regards the type of case at present accommodated at Kirkburton remains unaltered and steps will be taken as occasion arises to make such similar arrangements as may be necessary for present and future patients who may be able to benefit by this form of treatment.

MINISTRY'S REPORT.

29. **Major COHEN** asked the Minister of Pensions if he will state when the report of his Department for the year ending 31st March, 1930, will be available?

Mr. PALING: My right hon. Friend hopes that the report referred to by the hon. and gallant Member will shortly be passed to the printers.

TRADE AND COMMERCE.

BRITISH INDUSTRIES FAIR.

30. **Mr. DOUGLAS HACKING** asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department whether any decision has yet been reached in connection with the suggestion made in the report of the Chelmsford Committee that a site should be acquired and buildings erected in which the British Industries Fair may be held in future years; and whether a committee will be appointed to formulate definite proposals?

Mr. GILLETT: A final decision must await the receipt and consideration of the report of a committee which it is proposed to appoint in pursuance of the recommendation in the Chelmsford Report.

31. **Mr. HACKING** asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department whether any decision has yet been reached in connection with an increased Government grant towards the advertisement of the British Industries Fair?

Mr. GILLETT: The recommendation in question is still receiving consideration.

Mr. HACKING: Is the hon. Member aware that the Chelmsford Committe reported some months ago? Cannot the Government come to a decision in regard to their recommendations?

Mr. GILLETT: The decision in regard to next year's exhibition will have to be made within the next two or three weeks.

39. **Mr. HANNON** asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department whether he will make a statement on the measures adopted by his Department to give the fullest possible advertisement to the forthcoming British Industries Fair at Olympia and Birmingham?

Mr. GILLETT: As the reply to this question is rather long, I propose, with the hon. Member's permission, to circulate it in the OFFICIAL REPORT.

Mr. HANNON: Will the hon. Member see that every possible effort is made by his Department to advertise the British Industries Fair?

Mr. GILLETT: Yes, Sir.

Mr. ERNEST BROWN: May I ask the hon. Member whether he is arranging, as a means of advertising this Fair, the writing of another article by the hon. Member for Treorchy in the "Western Mail" and the "Times"?

Following is the answer:

As regards publicity for the Fair overseas, a series of five letters, issued in 10 languages, was addressed personally to nearly 60,000 buyers in over 90 overseas countries. An advance edition of the catalogues of the London and Birmingham Sections of the Fair was issued immediately after Christmas to overseas buyers in countries sufficiently near to enable them to receive the catalogues before leaving for England. In addition, announcements about the Fair have appeared in appropriate organs of the Press in many foreign and Empire countries, while arrangements have also been made for the publication of articles relating to the Fair and various branches of British industry represented therein. British Chambers of Commerce abroad and local branches of British steamship companies, railways, banks, insurance companies, etc., have helped by displaying in their offices showcards and literature of the Fair printed in the language of the country. In some places, overseas officers of my Department have arranged for the display of posters relating to the Fair and for announcements by wireless. Notices about the Fair are displayed in the trains on European and other railway systems. Valuable publicity for the Fair is also secured by means of a special cancellation stamp which is used by the Post Office for all letters going overseas for some weeks preceding the date of the Fair

As regards home publicity, in addition to a large amount of paid advertising which has been arranged for in the trade and general Press, the Fair receives a very generous amount of editorial notice in all sections of the Press, both on account of its general news value, and also, no doubt, in consequence of a genuine desire to support an important national enterprise. The showcards of the Fair are displayed in post offices, banks, etc., and by exhibitors, while this year, thanks to the generosity of the British Poster Advertising Association in placing at our disposal 12,500 free sites throughout Great Britain and Ireland, the Fair will be widely advertised by means of large posters. Many of the

railway companies, including the London Metropolitan and Underground railways, also display posters relating to the Fair, while other posters are shown on omnibuses, vans, etc.

A large number of important advertising firms in addition to the actual exhibitors at the Fair, include in their Press advertisements a reference to the Fair. Arrangements have been made with the British Broadcasting Corporation for broadcast announcements about the Fair. The various Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations, etc., also give valuable assistance in bringing the Fair to the notice of their members. Invitations to over 160,000 trade buyers in this country will be issued prior to the Fair.

RUSSIA.

32. **Mr. ALBERY** asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department if he can give any comparative figures concerning American and English trade with Soviet Russia during the last six months?

Mr. GILLETT: As the answer to the hon. Member's question is rather long, I will, with his permission, circulate the information in the OFFICIAL REPORT.

Mr. ALBERY: I asked a precisely similar question in May last. The answer was not long then.

Mr. GILLETT: It is rather longer than usual.

HON. MEMBERS: Read it!

Mr. ALBERY: May I appeal to the hon. Member to read the reply? I cannot see why he cannot give the reply to-day.

Mr. GILLETT: I will read the reply.

STATEMENT based on Soviet Customs returns showing the value of imports into and exports from the Soviet Union consigned from and to the United Kingdom and the United States of America for the six months ended June 30th, 1930.*

Imports into Soviet Union.		Exports from Soviet Union.	
From United Kingdom.	From United States of America.	To United Kingdom	To United States of America.
Million roubles. 35·4	Million roubles. 167·1	Million roubles. 96·6	Million roubles. 19·2

* Latest period for which official Soviet returns are available.

II. STATEMENT based on United States Department of Commerce trade returns and the Accounts relating to the Trade and Navigation of the United Kingdom showing the value of exports from and imports into the United Kingdom and the United States of America respectively consigned to and from the Soviet Union during the 6 months ended September 30th, 1930.*

Exports to Soviet Union.		Imports from Soviet Union.	
From United Kingdom.	From United States of America.	Into United Kingdom.	Into United States of America.
£ millions. 4·9	£ millions. ($ 4·85 = £1) 10·3	£ millions. 14·8	£ millions. ($ 4·85 = £1). 2·8

* Latest period for which these returns are available.

EXPORT CREDITS (RUSSIA).

34. **Sir K. WOOD** asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department whether he is now prepared to place some limit upon the amount of Government risk outstanding at any one time in connection with trading with Russia under the export credits guarantee scheme?

Mr. GILLETT: No, Sir.

Sir K. WOOD: Does the hon. Member not think that, inasmuch as the Soviet Government can pay cash for munitions of war, there should be some restrictions in this case?

Mr. GILLETT: I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that we are guided by the advisory committee in all these questions.

Mr. W. J. BROWN: Does the hon. Member not think that the figures he has just read justify a substantial increase in trade facilities with Russia?

Mr. GILLETT: Not the figures that I have just read.

35. **Mr. SCURR** asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department the amount of losses incurred under the export credits guarantee scheme in respect of exports to Soviet Russia since the scheme was extended to cover such exports, and the amount of losses during the same period in respect of exports to all other countries; and what has been the total amount of premiums received during the same period for guarantees in respect of exports to Russia and to all other countries, respectively?

Mr. GILLETT: It is impossible to calculate what losses, if any, have been incurred under the Export Credits Guarantee Scheme since the 1st August, 1929, when it was extended to cover exports to Russia, since a large proportion of the guarantees given are still current. Any losses that may accrue will in due course be shown in the annual commercial accounts. I may, however, say that up to the present all payments guaranteed in connection with exports to Russia have been duly made. I do not think it is desirable to give the information asked for in the second part of the question.

Mr. HACKING: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that, if there is one failure in Russia, the Government may lose millions of pounds?

Mr. MILLS: Is the hon. Gentleman able to say whether the munitions of war sent by Mr. Winston Churchill to the whites——[*Interruption.*]

IMPORTED PRODUCE (PRICES).

37. **Mr. McSHANE** asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department the price of butter within the Commonwealth of Australia and the c.i.f. price at which Australian butter is sold on import into the United Kingdom?

Mr. GILLETT: According to my information the wholesale price of the choicest grade of butter in Australia for the first week in December, 1930, was 135s. 4d. per cwt. in Victoria and Tasmania, 128s. 4d. in South Australia, 142s. in New South Wales, 168s. in Queensland; the quotations are in Australian currency. The average recorded value of butter imported into the United Kingdom declared as consigned from Australia during the month of December was 104s. per cwt. I am unable to say how closely the figures are comparable.

Mr. BOYCE: Is the Secretary of the Overseas Trade Department aware that the Australian Dairy Produce Board, who are responsible for importing and marketing this butter, are anxious to obtain the highest price that competition in this country will allow; and is he also aware that last year the importation of Danish butter was two and a half times more than that of Australian butter which has to compete with it?

Mr. McSHANE: Is not this an excellent example of dumping?

38. **Mr. McSHANE** asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department the price of wheat within the United States of America, and the c.i.f. price at which wheat from the United States of America is sold on import into the United Kingdom?

Mr. GILLETT: According to published information the quotation in Chicago for a representative grade of wheat, namely: No. 2 hard winter wheat on 21st January, 1931, was reported as equivalent to 6s. 1½d. per cwt. I have no information which would give the c.i.f. price at which wheat of identical grade of United States origin was being sold on import into the United Kingdom at that date but the average recorded value of wheat imported into the United Kingdom during December declared as consigned from the United States was 6s. 8½d. per cwt.

YUGOSLAVIA.

40. **Mr. HANNON** asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department whether, having regard to the recommendations embodied in the report of the Commercial Secretary at His Majesty's Legation at Belgrade on the economic conditions in Yugoslavia, he proposes to take any action to encourage the possible extension of British trade with that country?

Mr. GILLETT: These aspects of salesmanship have recently received very special attention by my Department, and are forcibly summarised in the report of the Goodenough Committee on Salesmanship. I need hardly add that they concern many other markets than that referred to by the hon. Member.

WAR MATERIAL (EXPORT).

73. **Mr. W. J. BROWN** asked the President of the Board of Trade the value of materials of war despatched from Great Britain to the countries adjacent to Soviet Russia during the years 1918, 1919, and 1920?

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. W. R. Smith): The countries now adjacent to Soviet Russia in Europe except Sweden and Roumania, were not separately distinguished in the trade accounts of the United Kingdom prior to 1921. Exports to Roumania of arms, ammunition and military and naval stores were valued at £32,000 in 1919, and £671,000 in 1920; they were nil in 1918. To all the other countries adjacent to the former Russian Empire, the value of the exports of arms, ammunition, etc., did not exceed £76,000 in 1918, £40,000 in 1919 and £111,000 in 1920.

Commander LOCKER-LAMPSON: Were any export credits used by the Soviet for the purpose of obtaining war materials?

Mr. SMITH: I believe that it is true to say that export credits are not available for war materials.

GOVERNMENT MEASURE.

76. **Mr. CHARLES WILLIAMS** asked the President of the Board of Trade if he will make a statement showing the steps His Majesty's Government have taken, and are taking, to develop and extend home, Imperial, and foreign trade?

Mr. GILLETT: Many statements too numerous to repeat in an answer to a Parliamentary question have recently been made on this subject in the House. The hon. Member will also find considerable information as regards the principal measures recently taken by His Majesty's Government on the matters referred to in the question in Part II of Command Paper No. 3746.

Mr. WILLIAMS: When will the hon. Gentleman be in a position to give one single case, in fact, in which the Government have done anything to encourage British trade in any way?

Mr. GILLETT: I could refer the hon. Member to a number of questions in connection with my Department in answer to his question.

Mr. WILLIAMS: Can the hon. Gentleman state if these are merely statements or accomplished facts?

SCANDINAVIA (BRITISH COAL).

82. **Mr. A. SOMERVILLE** asked the Secretary for Mines whether any Scandinavian order for coal has been secured by Britain as a result of the recent visit to Scandinavia of the British trade mission?

The SECRETARY for MINES (Mr. Shinwell): I would refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave to the hon. and gallant Member for Wycombe (Major-General Sir A. Knox) on 16th December last.

AGRICULTURE.

UNEMPLOYMENT.

41. **Mr. ALBERY** asked the Minister of Agriculture if the Government intend to take any emergency action to prevent an increase of unemployment in the agricultural industry in the immediate future?

Mr. WILLIAM WHITELEY (Lord of the Treasury): I have to express the regret of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture who through illness is unable to be in his place this afternoon. I have been asked to reply. My right hon. Friend is not in a position to make any statement on the matter.

WHEAT ACREAGE.

42 **Mr. ALBERY** asked the Minister of Agriculture what acreage was planted to wheat in England and Wales last year; and what is the estimated acreage for the coming season?

Mr. WILLIAM WHITELEY: The acreage under wheat in England and Wales as returned by occupiers of agricultural holdings exceeding one acre on 4th June, 1930, was 1,346,000 acres. My right hon. Friend has no information as to the actual acreage planted or to be planted during the current season, but reports furnished by the Ministry's Crop Reporters on 1st January indicate that the area already planted to wheat at that date was about 7 per cent. less than on the 1st January, 1930.

POULTRY (DEPREDATIONS BY FOXES).

43. **Mr. EDE** asked the Minister of Agriculture if his attention has been called to the losses sustained by breeders of pedigree poultry in the district of Peacehaven, Sussex, during the last two years, and especially since the turning out of 30 young foxes on Telscombe Tye last autumn; and what action he proposes to take for the protection of the industry from the losses it is sustaining through the depredations of the foxes?

Mr. WILLIAM WHITELEY: My right hon. Friend has caused inquiries to be made into depredations by foxes in the Peacehaven district. My hon. Friend is no doubt aware that there has been established a joint standing committee of the National Poultry Council and the Masters of Foxhounds Association to deal with claims for compensation in respect of losses sustained by poultry farmers through the depredations of foxes, and my right hon. Friend proposes to communicate with the joint committee upon the subject.

Mr. ALPASS: Is it not a fact that it is very difficult to get claims for loss of poultry by foxes considered at all, and that, even if they are considered, the compensation that is given is altogether inadequate?

Mr. WHITELEY: I can only say that, as stated in the last part of the answer, my right hon. Friend is getting in touch with the joint committee who have this

Mr. HANNON: Is it not the case that masters of hunts are only too willing to consider legitimate claims?

HON. MEMBERS: No!

ALLOTMENTS ACTS (ADVERTISEMENTS).

44. **Captain P. MACDONALD** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether it is by his authority that advertisements are being inserted in the newspapers inviting persons wholly or partially unemployed to enrol their names as desiring to obtain allotments under the Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Bill; and from what source is the expenditure on such advertisements being met?

Mr. WILLIAM WHITELEY: My right hon. Friend has not seen the advertisements to which the hon. and gallant Member refers, but he is aware that a large number of local authorities responsible for administering the Allotments Acts have recently taken steps to ascertain the extent of the demand for allotment gardens existing in their areas among persons who are unemployed or not in full-time employment. This action by local authorities was suggested by the Minister in a circular letter issued on the 6th December last. In reply to the last part of the question, the cost of advertisements and any other inquiries will be defrayed by local authorities as part of their expenses under the Allotments Acts.

Mr. MILLS: Is not the reason for these advertisements the idea that prospective settlers may have an opportunity of getting seeds and equipment before the season starts?

CEREAL GROWING.

46. **Viscount WOLMER** asked the Prime Minister when he will be in a position to announce the steps which he proposes to take to implement his pledge, given on 1st August last, that as soon as the conclusions of the Imperial Conference are known the Government will undertake whatever practical steps can be devised to put cereal growing in this country on an economic foundation?

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald): Not at the moment.

Viscount WOLMER: Is the Prime

passing, the next season will be upon us in a very short time: how long is he going to keep the farmers waiting?

The PRIME MINISTER: I am perfectly well aware of that fact, and during the time the late Government were in office I pressed for five years for something of the same kind. If the Noble Lord will allow me to tell him when I am ready, he can then put down a question, and I will answer it.

Sir ARTHUR STEEL-MAITLAND: May I ask whether the Prime Minister will be able to give an answer before March, which is the latest date possible for farmers to make their plans for the season?

The PRIME MINISTER: I should think so.

Mr. de ROTHSCHILD: Can the right hon. Gentleman give us any idea when this will be? So many promises have been made. [HON. MEMBERS: "Speech!"] I should like to know when the last promise made by the Prime Minister will be implemented?

The PRIME MINISTER: If the hon. Member will give me notice, I will answer the question.

MALE WORKERS.

50. **Mr. C. WILLIAMS** asked the Minister of Agriculture if the final figures are now available showing the decrease in the number of male workers employed on agricultural holdings above one acre during the last year?

Mr. WILLIAM WHITELEY: The revised figures relating to agricultural workers employed in England and Wales on holdings above one acre in extent on 4th June, 1930, show that there was a decrease in the total number of male workers since 4th June, 1929, of 23,093.

SCHNEIDER TROPHY RACE.

47. **Mr. SMITHERS** asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the fact that in September, 1929, he pledged the British nation to a continuation in the test for the Schneider trophy, by assuring Italy that Great Britain would do her level best to win again, he will state the nature of the principle which now prevents the Government from officially supporting the contest?

The PRIME MINISTER: The construction which the hon. Member seeks to place on my informal remarks on the evening of the contest in 1929 is quite unwarrantable. I was giving expression to the hope, which we all shared, that a British entry would be forthcoming for the next contest and, to enable such an entry to be organised, the clearest possible intimation was given in the following month that the Government would not again be prepared to enter an official team.

Neither of the two organisations primarily interested, namely the Royal Aero Club and the Society of British Aircraft Constructors, made any representations to the Air Ministry until, more than a year later, the Royal Aero Club definitely stated they were unable to raise the funds or undertake the organisation necessary to defend the trophy. On this basis the Government again considered the matter, and decided that their previous policy must be maintained. This was communicated to the Royal Aero Club on the 15th of this month, and it was only on the 20th, nearly 15 months after the original announcement, that for the first time an offer was forthcoming to try to raise the necessary funds. Even then there was no guarantee that the necessary funds would be raised. In all the circumstances the Government could not regard this as justifying a reversal of their previous decisions.

As regards the last part of the question, I would refer the hon. Member to the replies given to the hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Wight (Captain P. Macdonald) and the right hon. Member for Hythe (Sir P. Sassoon) on the 21st January and to the clear statement which appeared in the Press on the 16th instant in pursuance of previous public announcements of Government policy in this matter.

Mr. SMITHERS: As the Prime Minister denies using the words mentioned, will he be so good as to answer the last part of the question and state what is the nature of the principle which now prevents the Government from giving sanction to the contest?

The PRIME MINISTER: The last part of the question I have answered. As to the first part, I repudiate the interpretation put upon my statement. A warn-

[The Prime Minister.]

ing was given immediately after that statement was made, so as to draw the attention of those interested to the fact that what I said was that I hoped the nation, not the Government, would enter the contest.

Commander LOCKER-LAMPSON: Will the right hon. Gentleman receive a deputation on the subject?

The PRIME MINISTER: I do not know whether I can anticipate the questions that will be put on this matter. I wish that the deputation had been sent six months ago, when there was a chance of doing something Personally, I am keenly interested in this contest. We waited for 15 months and nothing was done, and now at the last minute, when no preparations have been made, I am asked to receive a deputation. I would be only too glad to receive a deputation if any good could be done by receiving it.

Mr. HORE-BELISHA: If it were made plain to the Prime Minister that it was the wish of this House that the Government should support this competition, would the Government reconsider their decision?

The PRIME MINISTER: I do hope that before hon. Members talk in that way they will consider the situation in which they now find themselves. I will leave it there. Personally, I am as keen about this contest as any man living. I do not think the Government are to blame if there is no British team entered for the contest.

Mr. WINTERTON: Has the Prime Minister forgotten the economy campaign?

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (FRIDAYS).

48. **Mr. C. WILLIAMS** asked the Prime Minister if he is yet in a position to announce his decision on the recommendation of the Select Committee of the House that the House should sit and rise an hour earlier on Fridays?

The PRIME MINISTER: I would refer the hon. Member to the answer which I gave on the 3rd November last in reply to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff East (Mr. Edmunds).

Mr. WILLIAMS: On that occasion I believe the right hon. Gentleman put the responsibility on the Whips solely. As Leader of the House, has he not been able to do anything in the common interests of the House on a matter which is agreed between all sections?

Mr. McSHANE: Is there any real difficulty in the way of doing this?

The PRIME MINISTER: There is no real difficulty in the way of doing it, but the answer that I gave, to which I have referred, states the position.

Mr. WILLIAMS: That is the point I am trying to raise; there is no difficulty. Is not the Prime Minister aware that this makes a great deal of difference to many people on all sides of the House, and for that reason cannot he ask those who have the means of making this arrangement to make it quickly in the interests of the House, and not to force further delay.

The PRIME MINISTER: I am only too anxious to consult the convenience of the House, but representations have been made to me to the contrary. If it is perfectly clear that a great majority of the House would prefer the change to be made, I shall certainly not stand in the way of it.

Mr. WILLIAMS: I will put a question next week in the hope that the Prime Minister will have further consultations and make further inquiry on the subject.

POST OFFICE.

COMMERCIAL ACCOUNTS.

59. **Mr. FREDERICK RILEY** asked the Postmaster-General what proportions of the total Post Office staff are treated, for the purpose of the commercial accounts, as being employed on postal work, telegraph work, and telephone work, respectively?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Lees-Smith): The total staff costs of the Post Office for the year 1929-30 were charged against the three services in the following proportions:

	Per cent.
Postal	61.57
Telegraph	9.89
Telephone	28.54

SCALE-PAYMENT OFFICER.

60. **Mr. BOWEN** asked the Postmaster-General what number of scale-payment sub-postmasters and sub-postmistresses receive inclusive remuneration of £50 per annum or less; and what number receive more than £50 per annum but less than £100?

Mr. LEES-SMITH: According to the latest available information the numbers are about 7,000 and 5,000 respectively.

61. **Mr. BOWEN** asked the Postmaster-General how many salaried offices have been reduced to scale-payment offices in the last five years; what are the reasons which led to such reductions; and whether, in view of the resulting increase in unestablished staff, he will endeavour to avoid such reductions?

Mr. LEES-SMITH: The number is 19. Such reductions are only carried out when salaried status is not warranted by volume of business. During the same period 11 scale-payment offices have been raised to salaried rank in the provinces, and a considerable number of scale-payment offices in London have been replaced by branch offices.

Mr. BOWEN: Can my hon. Friend assure the House that the Post Office will not continue the down-grading of these offices without due consideration for all the people concerned?

Mr. LEES-SMITH: There has been no down-grading. Naturally, as the population rises or falls in an area, some go up and some go down, but the amount of up-grading is equivalent to the amount of down-grading.

Mr. BOWEN: Does my hon. Friend not realise that the reduction of salaried offices to scale-payment offices involves a considerable reduction to everyone concerned?

Mr. LEES-SMITH: Yes, but I was endeavouring to point out that the raising of scale-payment offices to salaried offices also involves an increase.

PROMOTION, CHESTER.

62. **Mr. BOWEN** asked the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the appointment to a vacant overseership at Chester of a sorting clerk and telegraphist who was sixth on the acting list has caused dissatisfaction among the staff; that among the senior officers who were passed over are officers who have performed satisfactorily every Grade A and Grade B acting duty; that the full proficiency of the officer appointed cannot be known since he has not performed all acting duties; and whether, in the circumstances, he will inquire into the grounds on which this appointment was made?

Mr. LEES-SMITH: I am aware of the circumstances of the case. The officer selected for promotion had had as wide experience as any of the other officers on the Acting List and had shown himself to possess distinctly better qualifications for promotion than any of his seniors. The recommendation of the local Promotion Board was made after full consideration of the claims of all the officers on the Acting List and I can find no reason to dissent from their conclusion.

ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF'S OFFICE (TYPISTS' WORK).

64. **Mr. W. J. BROWN** asked the Postmaster-General what cost is involved in the maintenance of the record of typists' work in operation in the Engineer-in-Chief's office; what is the need for maintaining such a record; and whether he will, in the interests of economy and efficiency, direct its substitution by the Treasury standard record?

Mr. LEES-SMITH: The cost is estimated at less than £2 15s. a week. A record of this kind is necessary for the purpose of continuous supervision and adjustment of staff to work, and the forms in use in the Engineer-in-Chief's office are considered to be the best adapted to the requirements in that office.

Mr. BROWN: Why is it that this one particular section of one particular office requires a form of record so much more complicated and expensive than any existing anywhere else in the Service?

Mr. LEES-SMITH: Because in this office a great deal of the work of typing is of a difficult character, and special forms are necessary, therefore, to record it.

IRISH SWEEPSTAKE (CORRESPONDENCE).

63. **Mr. HACKING** asked the Postmaster-General how many letters have been opened by the Post Office in connection with the Irish sweepstake on the Grand National race; and how much money has been returned to senders?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Clynes): I have been asked to reply to this question. I regret that it would not be in the public interest for the information to be given.

Mr. HACKING: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that this information was given in connection with the last sweepstake?

Mr. CLYNES: I am not aware of it.

Colonel ASHLEY: What is the reason for withholding the information?

Mr. CLYNES: For the reason that it is giving information to those from whom it is most desirable to withhold it.

Mr. HACKING: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Postmaster-General gave me the information in connection with the recent sweepstake in Dublin?

Mr. REMER: Is it a fact that purely private letters, not in any way connected with the sweepstake, are being opened?

Mr. HANNON: By what rule does the Post Office draw the line in opening private correspondence? How are the officers of the Post Office instructed to deal with the opening of private correspondence?

HYDE PARK (GAMES).

67. **Mr. CHATER** asked the First Commissioner of Works whether his attention has been drawn to the scarcity of playing fields for organised games; and whether he will assist to meet this need by providing football and cricket pitches in Hyde Park?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Lansbury): I have had this question under consideration from time to time, and I have recently provided increased facilities for the playing of football, cricket and bowls in Hyde Park. I will, however, again look into the matter.

Lieut.-Colonel MOORE: Is the right hon. Gentleman considering the others who do not play games, and their well-being?

Mr. LANSBURY: Yes, certainly I am.

NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, EDINBURGH.

68. **Mr. MATHERS** asked the First Commissioner of Works what is the present position in connection with the erection of Government buildings in Edinburgh; whether a site has been decided upon; and when he expects work to commence?

Mr. LANSBURY: The scheme for the erection of Departmental offices on the Calton Jail site has been abandoned. Various methods of dealing with the Departmental accommodation requirements in Edinburgh are at present under consideration, but no decision has yet been reached.

Major COLVILLE: Is the right hon. Gentleman's Department in close co-operation with the local authorities in Edinburgh on this matter?

Mr. LANSBURY: Yes, Sir.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT, 1926.

69. **Mr. MATHERS** asked the Attorney-General the cost of obtaining an unopposed adoption order under the Adoption of Children Act, 1926?

The SOLICITOR-GENERAL (Sir Stafford Cripps): The Court fees on this application amount to nearly £3 in the High Court, £1 in a County Court and a few shillings in a Court of Summary Jurisdiction. The inquiry by the guardian *ad litem* costs about £11 in the High Court. In County Courts and Courts of Summary Jurisdiction the expenses of the guardian *ad litem* are seldom charged to the applicant, and I have no information as to their extent. I have no means of ascertaining what charges are made to applicants who employ legal assistance.

PENSIONS (POOR LAW DISQUALIFICATION).

78. **Mr. GEORGE OLIVER** asked the Minister of Health if he has considered

the communication sent to him by the Derbyshire County Council asking that the disqualification of a person receiving a pension under the Widows', Orphans', and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act, 1929, or the Old Age Pensions Acts should be removed where a person is an inmate of any workhouse or Poor Law institution for the purpose of receiving medical or surgical treatment, notwithstanding that such person was first admitted to the institution by reason of other causes; and whether he intends to introduce amending legislation to give effect to this proposal?

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the MINISTRY of HEALTH (Miss Lawrence): The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative: as regards the second part, my right hon. Friend is doubtful how far legislation on the lines suggested would be for the benefit of the pensioners in view of the rights of recovery possessed by the local authority.

TOWN-PLANNING SCHEMES (ADVERTISEMENTS).

79. **Mr. HURD** asked the Minister of Health which town-planning schemes finally approved by him contain provisions for the regulation or control of the display of advertisements?

Miss LAWRENCE: Provisions for the control of advertisements are included in almost all the town planning schemes at present approved. I will send the hon. Member a list.

HOUSING.

81. **Mr. HURD** asked the Minister of Health the number of houses completed at 31st December, 1930 in agricultural parishes in England and Wales with State assistance under the Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1924?

Miss LAWRENCE: The number was 18,583.

COTTON INDUSTRY (DISPUTE).

Mr. HACKING (*by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the recent statement by the Home Secretary that the Cabinet is prepared to intervene in the dispute in the cotton industry, he will tell the House what action the Government proposes to take to effect an early settlement?

The PRIME MINISTER: I understand that what the Home Secretary said was that, if a favourable opportunity presented itself, he was sure his colleagues of the Cabinet would readily avail themselves of it, and, after the result of the ballot was known, he made it clear that the Government cannot detach its mind from the situation thus produced. It will be plain to everyone that the present situation is one of great difficulty, but I can assure the House that there will be no delay in taking any action that seems calculated to lead to a settlement.

Mr. HACKING: In view of the fact of the wording of the last ballot paper having been misunderstood by a very large number of the operatives, will the right hon. Gentleman do his utmost to press the Weavers Amalgamation to issue a fresh ballot paper and take a fresh vote at the earliest possible moment?

The PRIME MINISTER: May I ask the hon. Member to leave that matter to us, unless he wishes to destroy completely any chance of successful intervention?

Mr. HACKING: May I ask if it is not the fact that there was grave misunderstanding in connection with the wording of the ballot paper?

WRITTEN ANSWERS.

BREAD PRICES.

Mr. WHITE asked the Minister of Labour if she has any information showing what was the price of the 4lb. loaf in 1914, in 1924 and at the present date in each of the following countries:—Great Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand?

Miss BONDFIELD, *pursuant to her reply* [OFFICIAL REPORT, 20th January, col. 20, Vol. 247], *supplied the following statement:*

In the following table are given such figures as are available with regard to

the price of four pounds of bread in the chief city of each of the countries named. The figures are taken from statistics officially compiled in the countries concerned, but in the absence of information as to the qualities of bread to which the various quotations relate it is not known how far the prices shown may be regarded as comparable one with another. The prices have been converted to sterling at the rates current at the dates quoted.

Country	Town.	Average price of Bread per 4 lb. (a).					
		July, 1914.		July, 1924.		July, 1930.	
		Original Currency.	Equivalent in Sterling.	Original Currency.	Equivalent in Sterling.	Original Currency.	Equivalent in Sterling.
			Pence.		Pence.		Pence.
Great Britain	London ...	5·5 Pence ...	5·5	8·7 Pence ...	8·7	8·0 Pence ...	8·0
Australia ...	Sydney ...	7·0 Pence ...	7·0	10·0 Pence ...	10·0	11·0 Pence ...	11·0
Belgium ...	Brussels ...	0·51 Francs (b)	4·8	2·45 Francs	6·1	Not available	—
Canada ...	Ottawa ...	14·8 Cents ...	7·3	26·8 Cents ...	14·6	26·8 to 34·8 Cents.	13·2 to 17·2
Denmark ...	Copenhagen	0·655 Kroner (c)	8·6	1·69 Kroner	14·9	1·40 Kroner	18·5
France ...	Paris ...	0·727 Francs	6·9	2·27 Francs	6·4	3·87 Francs	7·5
Germany ...	Berlin ...	0·509 Marks (d)	6·0	0·509 Marks	6·7	0·703 Marks	8·3
Italy ...	Rome ...	0·945 Lire (e)	9·0	3·09 Lire ...	7·3	3·27 to 4·09 Lire.	8·4 to 10·6
New Zealand	Wellington	7·5 Pence (g)	7·5	13·0 Pence ...	13·0	14·0 Pence(f)	14·0
Sweden ...	Stockholm	1·00 Kronor (h)	13·2	1·49 Kroner (i)	21·5	1·47 Kronor (j)	19·5
United States	Washington, D.C.	22·4 Cents(h)	11·1	36·0 Cents ...	19·8	35·6 Cents ...	17·6

(a) White bread, except in the case of Germany, where the prices relate to rye-bread.
(b) April, 1914.
(c) Average prices at beginning of 1914 in chief towns and country districts.
(d) Average for October, 1913, January, April, and July, 1914.
(e) 30th June, 1914.
(f) 3rd Quarter, 1930.
(g) Average for four chief centres of New Zealand.
(h) Average for year, 1913.
(i) Average for year, 1924.
(j) Average for Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö.

EDUCATION.

PERFORMING ANIMAL ENTERTAINMENTS.

Mr. FREEMAN asked the President of the Board of Education whether, in view of the fact that the school organisation is used to allow children to attend entertainments which include performing animal turns, he will consider the desirability of prohibiting it, particularly in view of the resolution passed unanimously by the Royal Society of Teachers at their last annual conference urging such action?

Mr. MORGAN JONES: My right hon. Friend has not received complaints as to any cases of the use of the school organisation for this purpose.

NON-PROVIDED SCHOOLS.

Sir W. JENKINS asked the President of the Board of Education what representatives were called to the conference convened by him to negotiate terms for the settlement of the religious matters arising out of the Education Bill; and why no representative body from Wales was invited to take part?

Sir C. TREVELYAN: The names of the 20 persons, whom I invited to the Conference, as being likely to prove representative of the five major interests involved in England and Wales are set out below. I did not consider that the conditions in Wales were in this respect sufficiently distinctive to justify my increasing the representation of each of these interests by inviting persons specially representative of Wales, as such.

Names of Persons invited to the Conference on Voluntary Schools held on 13th and 14th January, 1931.

Church of England:
- The Most Rev. and Right Hon. The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, G.C.V.O., D.D. (prevented by illness from attending).
- Sir W. Henry Hadow, C.B.E., D.Mus.
- Mr. R. Holland.
- Lieut.-Colonel R. E. Martin, C.M.G.

Free Churches:
- Rev. M. E. Aubrey, M.A.
- Rev. J. D. Jones, D.D., C.H.
- Rev. W. Lewis Robertson, D.D.
- Rev. H. B. Workman, D.D., D.Litt.

Roman Catholic Church:
- His Eminence Cardinal Francis Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster.
- The Most Rev. The Archbishop of Cardiff.
- Mr. F. N. Blundell, D.L., J.P.
- Mr. J. Scurr, M.P.

Local Education Authorities:
- Alderman J. H. S. Aitken.
- Alderman F. Askew, J.P.
- Major A. Leycester-Penrhyn.
- Mr. James Graham, Ph.D.

Teachers:
- Mrs. Leah Manning, J.P.
- Mr. Angus Roberts.
- Mr. F. Mander.
- Mr. F. W. Goldstone, M.A.

Mr. D. G. SOMERVILLE asked the President of the Board of Education if he can give any estimate of the sum at issue in meeting the claims put forward under the Education (School Attendance) Bill by the representatives of the non-provided schools?

Mr. MORGAN JONES: No, Sir. The claims have not been put forward in a form that would enable my right hon. Friend to frame an estimate. It is, however, clear that it would in many cases be an economy of public funds if a local authority were enabled to make a contribution to the improvement of the premises of a non-provided school where it would otherwise be necessary for them to incur far greater expenditure on the provision of a new school.

Sir W. JENKINS asked the President of the Board of Education what is the amount paid by local education authorities towards non-provided schools and Roman Catholic schools in Wales from funds provided by rates and what grant is given by the Board of Education for such purposes, giving each item of payment separately?

Sir C. TREVELYAN: The returns submitted to me do not enable me to distinguish the expenditure incurred by local education authorities on the maintenance of non-provided schools from that incurred on the maintenance of provided schools. The expenditure ranks for grant as part of the expenditure on elementary education generally.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS (FREE PLACES).

Mr. J. WILSON asked the President of the Board of Education if he will give comparative figures to the latest convenient date showing the number and names of the local education authorities which are permitted to award more than 50 per cent. free places in their grant-aided secondary schools; the number of schools concerned in each education area; and the percentage admitted in each case?

Sir C. TREVELYAN: The particulars are as follow:

STATEMENT of Local Education Authorities in whose areas the Board have approved the award of free places tenable at Grant-aided Secondary Schools, in excess of 50 per cent. of the admissions in the *previous* school year.

The third column shows the number of free places awarded at grant-aided secondary schools at the beginning of the school year 1930-31, calculated as a percentage of the number of pupils admitted to these schools during the school year 1929-30.

Local Education Authority.	Number of Schools.	Per-cent-age.
I. *Areas in which all the Schools are free.*		
Smethwick, County Borough Council	2	—

Local Education Authority.	Number of Schools.	Percentage.
II. *Areas in which some of the Schools are free.*		
Wallasey, County Borough Council	5	56.4
Plymouth, County Borough Council	8	90.4
Durham County Council ...	22	77.1
Darlington, County Borough Council	5	69.8
Manchester, County Borough Council	17	65.0
Oldham, County Borough Council	3	63.7
Salford, County Borough Council	7	62.7
Bradford, County Borough Council	13	115.2
Sheffield, County Borough Council	9	70.8
Glamorgan County Council ...	33	72.1
Cardiff, County Borough Council	9	58.0
Merthyr Tydfil, County Borough Council	4	74.6
Swansea, County Borough Council	4	62.4
Newport, County Borough Council	4	76.2
III. *Areas in which none of the Schools is free.*		
Gateshead, County Borough Council	1	56.9
West Ham, County Borough Council	5	68.4
Gloucester County Council ...	19	53.2
Barrow, County Borough Council	2	100.5
Bootle, County Borough Council	2	75.4
Preston, County Borough Council	5	53.4
Rochdale, County Borough Council	1	57.3
Stoke-on-Trent, County Borough Council	4	54.0
York, County Borough Council	6	55.0
Yorks, West Riding, County Council	49	63.6
Barnsley, County Borough Council	2	66.7
Doncaster, County Borough Council	2	90.0
Halifax, County Borough Council	6	55.6
Huddersfield, County Borough Council	4	71.1
Rotherham, County Borough Council	2	68.7
Wakefield, County Borough Council	4	55.1
Anglesey County Council ...	3	70.2
Brecon County Council ...	5	79.3
Merioneth County Council ...	7	56.1
Montgomery County Council...	8	65.0
Radnor County Council ...	2	76.0

NURSERY SCHOOLS.

Mr. BROAD asked the President of the Board of Education how many nursery schools were in existence on 30th June, 1929; how many new nursery schools have been approved in the period 1st July, 1929, to 31st December, 1930, inclusive; the number of these now under construction; the number functioning; and the average initial cost of building a new school?

Sir C. TREVELYAN: On 30th June, 1929, there were 28 recognised nursery schools in existence. Plans for four additional schools had already been approved, and during the period from 1st July, 1929, to 31st December, 1930, approval was given to plans for 23 further new schools. Of the 27 schools thus proposed, 15 are now open and recognised by the Board (making a total of 43) and eight are believed to be under construction. The cost of building a new nursery school is approximately £36 per place.

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INDIA.

LLOYD QUAY, KARACHI (OPENING CEREMONY).

Sir C. OMAN asked the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that Reuter's and other telegrams, describing the assaults and insults suffered by British officers and officials at the opening of the new wharf at Karachi by the Governor of Bombay on 15th November last, were censored and mutilated; and, if so, by whom and where this was done?

Mr. BENN: I would refer the hon. and gallant Member to the answers given to the hon. and gallant Member for Chelmsford (Colonel Howard-Bury) on 8th and 19th December.

ARREST.

Mr. HORRABIN asked the Secretary of State for India whether he will cause inquiry to be made into the case of Ramchandur Lakhiram Chandhavi, of Rohtak, who was arrested on 18th November last, and the allegations made by him to the magistrates as to his treatment by the police?

Mr. BENN: I have asked for a report on this case, and will communicate with the hon. Member when I receive it.

BANNED CINEMATOGRAPH FILMS.

Mr. DAY asked the Secretary of State for India whether he has had any recent reports of films that have been banned in India, and will he give particulars?

Mr. BENN: According to the information in my possession, two films, other than those named in the list which I circulated on 28th November, have been banned in India during the months of November and December. These were a film showing the funeral procession of Jatindra Nath Das, and a film entitled "One Stolen Night."

AIR SERVICE, KARACHI-CALCUTTA.

Major POLE asked the Secretary of State for India whether he has now received a report from the Government of India in the matter of the inauguration of an air service from Karachi, via Jodpur, Delhi, and Allahabad, to Calcutta with Government aeroplanes?

Mr. BENN: Yes, Sir. The Government of India propose to proceed with the scheme, but there has been some delay owing to a change of plans.

POST OFFICE.

TRUNK CALLS.

Mr. WHITE asked the Postmaster-General the average time taken to establish connection when a trunk call is made from London to Manchester, from London to Newcastle-on-Tyne, from London to Plymouth, and from Cardiff to Kingston-upon-Hull, respectively?

Mr. LEES-SMITH: The average times taken to establish the connections referred to during the three busiest hours of the day are 13.9, 10.2, 9.1 and 15 minutes, respectively. If the calls made at other hours of the day were included, the figures would, of course, be much lower.

DOG LICENCES.

Captain CROOKSHANK asked the Postmaster-General if he is aware that in cases of dog licences it is necessary for the Post Office official concerned to fill in the hour and minute at which it is issued; that this is not the case with other licences; and if he will state the reason for this differentiation?

Mr. LEES-SMITH: The precise time of issue must be indicated on gun and game licences as well as on dog licences. This practice is imposed in order to facilitate carrying out the law.

BRITISH INDUSTRIES (POSTMARK ADVERTISEMENT).

Mr. SHAKESPEARE asked the Postmaster-General whether he will give the same postal facilities to the boot and shoe industry to advertise their manufactures by cancellation stamps as he has offered to the Lancashire cotton industry?

Mr. LEES-SMITH: Advertisement of the British Industries Fair by postmark is an established practice; this year the scope of the fair has been enlarged by the inclusion of a new section on a very large scale, that of cotton textiles, and I have agreed that prominence shall be given to that fact in the postmark advertisement of the fair. Similar conditions do not apply to the boot and shoe industry.

ENGINEERING STAFF.

Mr. WHITE asked the Postmaster-General the number of engineering employés on the staff of the Post Office on 1st January, 1929, and 1st January, 1930, respectively?

Mr. LEES-SMITH: The figures for which the hon. Member asks, namely, 32,389 and 31,544, were furnished in reply to his question on 11th February, 1930.

TELEPHONES (NUMBER CHANGES).

Mr. D. G. SOMERVILLE asked the Postmaster-General whether, seeing that the substitution of automatic telephones for telephones worked on the light system has involved the changes of numbers and exchanges to subscribers, he can give an assurance that these numbers and exchanges will not again be altered in the near future should there be a large extension in the use of the telephone?

Mr. LEES-SMITH: Changes of subscribers' numbers, which are made from time to time as the service grows and new exchanges become necessary, could only be avoided by very large and uneconomical expenditure on line and other plant. But, subject to these considerations, every care is taken to reduce number changes to a minimum, and, in par-

ticular, to avoid a second change of number for any given subscriber within a relatively short space of time.

GRAND OPERA (SUBSIDY).

Mr. WHITE asked the Postmaster-General if he will give a list of the individuals or organisations from whom he has received representations in regard to the proposed subsidy to the Covent Garden Opera Syndicate, stating the nature of such representations in each case?

Mr. LEES-SMITH: I have received no representations from individuals or organisations in regard to this matter.

TRADE AND COMMERCE.

TRADE MISSION, FAR EAST.

Mr. SMITHERS asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department when the economic mission to the Far East will return to this country; will it make a report; and will that report be made public?

Mr. GILLETT: Under present arrangements, the trade mission to the Far East will return to this country towards the end of March or the beginning of April. The answer to both the second and third parts of the question is in the affirmative.

EXPORT CREDITS.

Mr. SMITHERS asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department the amount granted in credits under the Export Credits Scheme in financing orders since 15th December, 1930, to Russia and to all other countries?

Mr. GILLETT: From 15th December, 1930, to 17th January, 1931, contracts concluded under the Export Credits Guarantee Scheme amounted to £146,398, in respect of exports to Russia and to £190,085 in respect of exports to all other countries.

RUSSIA (EXPORTS TO GREAT BRITAIN).

Sir H. NIELD asked the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department the prices within Soviet Russia of cereals, butter, eggs, bacon, fowls, sugar, and apples, and the c.i.f. prices at which these commodities are sold on import into the United Kingdom?

Mr. GILLETT: Owing to the fact that wholesale prices within the Soviet Union are not ascertainable, I regret that it is not possible to obtain particulars of prices in that country which are strictly comparable with the c.i.f. prices of the same goods in the United Kingdom. Such figures as I have been able to ascertain are given in the following tables.

STATEMENT I.

Statement showing the total quantities and declared values and the average declared values (c.i.f.) of the undermentioned commodities imported into Great Britain and Northern Ireland, registered during the period October–December, 1930, as consigned from the Soviet Union (Russia).

Commodity.	October–December, 1930.		
	Quantity.	Declared value.	Average declared value (c.i.f.).
	Cwts.	£	£ s. d.
Wheat	15,381,142	4,409,165	5 9
Barley	3,433,276	650,485	3 9½
Oats	2,289,632	492,079	4 3½
Buckwheat	2,000	800	8 0
Butter	37,947	199,731	5 5 3
Bacon	876	2,696	3 1 7
Poultry, dead	10,806	53,439	4 18 11
Apples, raw	6	5	*

* This figure would have no significance.

NOTE.—No imports of Rye, Maize, Eggs, Poultry, alive, or Sugar, refined or unrefined, were recorded during the above period as consigned from the Soviet Union. The imports of fowls, as such, are not separately distinguished in the official trade returns of the United Kingdom.

STATEMENT II.

Prices charged in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for certain commodities. December, 1930.

Note I.—Exchange has been calculated at the *official* rate of exchange for December 31st, 1930—£1 = roubles 9·4154. This rate is not, however, necessarily applicable to internal prices.

Note II.—Owing to the fact that the greater part of production within the Soviet Union is owned by the Government of that territory, wholesale prices cannot be ascertained.

	In Co-operative Stores.			On the "free market."		
	Moscow.	Leningrad.	Rural districts.	Moscow.	Leningrad.	Rural districts.
	d	d	d	d	d	d
Cereals :—	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Wheat flour, per cwt.						
Quality, 50 per cent.	1 8 0	1 10 0	—	32 7 0 to 37 15 0	—	—
Quality, 85 per cent.	19 6	—	0 19 0 to 1 0 0	10 16 0	—	12 3 0
Rye flour, per cwt.	0 10 0	1 1 6	0 10 9 to 0 12 9	—	—	2 14 0 to 2 16 0
Buckwheat, per cwt.	0 19 6	1 3 9	—	13 10 0 to 21 14 0	10 16 0	—
Semolina, per cwt.	2 3 0	2 3 0	—	21 12 0	10 16 0	—
Butter, per cwt. ...	16 8 0	16 12 0	20 4 0	124 0 0 to 135 0 0	135 0 0 to 162 0 0	94 10 0
Eggs, per great hundred	0 16 6	18 0	1 12 0	5 2 0 to 6 8 0	7 0 0	3 16 0 to 4 6 0
Fowls, per cwt. ...	19 0 0	—	—	43 0 0	54 0 0 to 70 0 0	—
Bacon, per cwt. ...	15 8 0	—	—	65 0 0	59 10 0	—
Sugar, per cwt.						
Soft	3 2 6	—	3 10 0	13 10 0	—	—
Refined	3 11 0	3 15 0	4 1 0	18 18 0	21 12 0	—
Apples, per cwt. ...	6 9 0 to 8 2 0	8 2 0	8 2 0	12 3 0	—	—

Sir H. HOPE asked the President of the Board of Trade whether any step has been, or is being, taken to restrict the dumping of cereals from Russia?

Mr. W. GRAHAM: I fear I can add nothing to the reply given to the hon. Member by my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department on 30th October last.

LACE (IMPORT, PARCEL POST).

Mr. O'CONNOR asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he can give any figures showing the import of lace through the parcels post for each of the half-years ended on 30th June, 1930, and 31st December, 1930, respectively?

Mr. W. R. SMITH: As regards the import of lace through the parcel post for the half-year ending 31st December, 1930, I would refer the hon. and learned Member to the answer I gave to questions asked on this subject by the hon. and gallant Member for Bournemouth (Sir H. Croft) on 23rd January. As regards the half-year ending on 30th June 1930, I regret that the desired information is not available.

WAR MATERIAL (EXPORT).

Mr. W. BROWN asked the President of the Board of Trade what materials of war were despatched from Great Britain to China, Poland, the Balkan States, Afghanistan, Persia, and Abyssinia during the years 1925 to 1929, inclusive, whilst the previous Government was in office?

Mr. W. R. SMITH: The following statement shows the total declared value of the exports of arms, ammunition and military and naval stores, of United Kingdom manufacture, during each of the

years 1925 to 1929, consigned to the countries specified. These figures include a certain amount of sporting arms and ammunition, blasting accessories, etc., which are not normally considered as war material but which cannot be completely separated. Particulars in respect of the period from the beginning of 1929 to 8th June, 1929, are not readily available.

Country to which consigned.	1925.	1926.	192..	1928.	1929.
	£	£	£	£	£
China (including Hong Kong, Macao and leased territories).	22,999	19,524	24,866	18,039	32,700
Poland (including Dantzig)	19,580	1,400	45,967	36,610	5,343
Yugoslavia	6,166	487	17,734	15,882	98,361
Greece	349,714	55,614	10,819	33,145	25,408
Albania	347	—	671	133	1,475
Bulgaria	117	2	2,617	1,278	—
Rumania	440,147	61,071	40,413	59,711	19,519
Turkey (European)	86,837	29,259	26,145	55,670	44,468
Afghanistan	51	6,327	—	5,104	—
Persia	5,589	3,593	13,101	15,943	30,750
Abyssinia...	6,774	8,444	310	3,030	744

EMPIRE SETTLEMENT.

Major GLYN asked the President of the Board of Trade how many persons have returned, during the last 12 months, to this country from Canada and Australia who had been in those Dominions for four years and over?

Mr. W. GRAHAM: The numbers of British subjects who were recorded as arriving to take up permanent residence in the United Kingdom after leaving permanent residence in Canada and Australia during the year 1930 were 15,820 and 12,808 respectively. Permanent residence is regarded as residence for a year or more. No further information is available as to the duration of the last permanent residence of persons arriving in this country.

TRADE DISPUTES ACT.

Mr. WHITE asked the Attorney-General how many prosecutions there have been under Sections 1, 2, and 3, respectively, of the Trade Disputes Act, 1927; and what, in each case, was the result of the prosecution?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No prosecutions have been instituted under Section 1 (Sub-section 2) of the Act of 1927, and no prosecutions can arise under Section 2 of that Act. From the beginning of 1927 to the end of 1929 there have been 94 prosecutions under the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act, 1875, but no information is available showing how many of these cases were affected by the provisions of Section 3 of the Act of 1927. The details are shown in the following table.

Prosecutions under Section 7 of the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act, 1875.

	Persons dealt with in Summary Courts.			
	Total.	Discharged.	Order made under Probation of Offenders Act, 1907.	Convicted and fined.
1927 (whole year)...	46	26	8	12
1928...	11†	8	—	3
1929...	34‡	6	25	3

* The Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act came into force in July, 1927.
† Excluding 2 persons committed for trial at Quarter Sessions; 1 acquitted and 1 fined.
‡ Excluding 1 person committed for trial at Quarter Sessions; acquitted.

POOR LAW RELIEF.

EXPENDITURE.

Sir W. de FRECE asked the Minister of Health the total amount of money expended by the Poor Law and/or public assistance authorities in England and Wales for the years 1929 and 1930; and what proportions of this amount were contributed by local rates?

Mr. GREENWOOD: The amount expended by Poor Law authorities in England and Wales during the financial year ended 31st March, 1929, on relief of the poor and purposes connected therewith (other than out of loans for capital purposes) was £39,670,895, of which about 84 per cent. was payable out of rates. The corresponding figures for the financial year ended 31st March, 1930, are estimated to be £39,250,000 and 81 per cent.

ABLE-BODIED UNEMPLOYED.

Sir W. de FRECE asked the Minister of Health the number of able-bodied unemployed who were being assisted by Poor Law relief on 31st March and 30th September, 1930, respectively?

Mr. GREENWOOD: The average number of persons (including dependent wives, but excluding children) in receipt of domiciliary relief who were ordinarily engaged in some regular occupation and relieved mainly on account of unemployment was 116,297 in March, 1930, and 57,177 in September, 1930. The numbers of dependent wives included in these figures were approximately 50,000 and 25,000 respectively.

PLYMOUTH.

Mr. HORE-BELISHA asked the Minister of Health the number of persons in receipt of Poor Law relief in the city of Plymouth, specifying categories, for the month of December, 1930?

Mr. GREENWOOD: The following statement shows the number of persons in receipt of poor relief in the city of Plymouth on Saturday, 27th December, 1930:

Institutional Relief (including casuals)	557
Domiciliary Relief (excluding persons in receipt of domiciliary medical relief only)	5,228
Total	5,785

TEST WORK.

Sir R. GOWER asked the Minister of Health whether he will consider the desirability of revising the principle laid down by him for the instruction of public assistance committees that the number of hours for which a man must be set to work shall be uniform for all cases, irrespective of whether the man is married or single or the amount of relief he is receiving, so as to provide that so far as practicable the amount of test work shall be proportionate to the relief received?

Miss LAWRENCE: No, Sir. A system under which the hours worked are proportionate to the amount of relief received is not in accordance with the object of the Relief Regulation Order, 1930, which is not the provision of work for wages but the maintenance and improvement of employability for which purpose regular and uniform hours of occupation or training are clearly desirable.

AGRICULTURE.

FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE.

Brigadier-General CLIFTON BROWN asked the Minister of Agriculture whether there have been any fresh outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease in Sussex or elsewhere during the past week; whether the source of infection at Westmeston has been discovered; and whether the outbreak is being dealt with by the slaughter of all animals or by the new proposals as regards inoculation?

Dr. ADDISON: No fresh outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease have occurred in any part of Great Britain since that confirmed on 18th January at Westmeston. The source of infection in that case has not been discovered. All the stock on the premises, consisting of 52 cattle, 97 sheep and 102 pigs, was slaughtered, all these animals having been in contact.

MARKETING BILL.

Brigadier-General CLIFTON BROWN asked the Minister of Agriculture whether he is aware of the opposition of the National Poultry Council and the National Farmers' Union to the principles and details of the proposal in his Marketing Bill; and, in view of the check to home production which they are

convinced will ensue, whether he will withdraw the Measure until he has consulted again with these producers' organisations?

Dr. ADDISON: I am aware of the opposition of the bodies referred to. I am also aware of a growing support for the Bill from the rank and file of producers. The answer to the last part of the question is in the negative.

WILD ANIMAL PERFORMANCES.

Sir R. GOWER asked the Home Secretary whether he will consider the desirability of introducing legislation making public performances by wild animals in this country illegal?

Mr. CLYNES: I am afraid that I cannot undertake to introduce legislation on this subject at the present time.

METROPOLITAN POLICE (CHIEF COMMISSIONER).

Mr. NAYLOR asked the Home Secretary whether the Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police is still absent on sick leave abroad; when he is expected to return to duty; and what steps are being taken, in view of the depleted staff at headquarters, to ensure the efficient control of the Force?

Mr. CLYNES: According to my latest information, Lord Byng will have to remain abroad for reasons of health until the early spring, but he is not out of touch with Scotland Yard, and under his general guidance I am confident that the work will be carried on with full efficiency by the senior officers of the Force.

LOAN CLUB SHARE-OUTS (POLICE PROTECTION).

Mr. CAMPBELL asked the Home Secretary if he will take steps to grant facilities for police protection inside as well as outside licensed premises during the share-out of loan clubs held therein, and so place all premises on an equal footing in that respect?

Mr. CLYNES: Any such question is a matter for the particular chief officer of police who is concerned and every case, I imagine, must be considered on its merits.

ROYAL PARKS (CINEMATOGRAPH FILMS).

Mr. DAY asked the First Commissioner of Works whether any permissions have been granted by his Department to film companies to take scenes in the royal parks during the previous six months; and will he give particulars?

Mr. LANSBURY: Since July, 1930, permission has been given in two cases—to the Gaumont Company, Limited, to photograph a scene in St. James's Park in July, 1930, and to Reginald Frogwell Productions, Limited, to take scenes for a film in Bushey and Richmond Parks in December, 1930.

ROYAL NAVY (ENGINE-ROOM ARTIFICERS).

Mr. W. G. HALL asked the First Lord of the Admiralty the total number of engine-room artificers, under the age of 30, who were eligible for the 1930 annual selection for mate (E); the number of candidates; and the number awarded commissions?

Mr. ALEXANDER: I regret that the information asked for in the first part of the question is not available. The names of 26 candidates were forwarded by fleet selection committees. Twelve of these candidates were selected to take the examination. Four were selected for promotion to acting mate (E).

TAX OFFICE, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT.

Captain P. MACDONALD asked the First Commissioner of Works by what date it is anticipated that the new office building for His Majesty's Inspector of Taxes and staff at Newport, Isle of Wight, will be ready for occupation?

Mr. LANSBURY: Negotiations for the hire of the new offices are not yet completed, and I regret, therefore, that I am not in a position to give the information asked for.

TRANSPORT.

BISHOP'S CASTLE RAILWAY.

Lieut.-Colonel WINDSOR-CLIVE asked the Minister of Transport whether he has received a copy of a resolution

passed by the town council of Bishop's Castle requesting him to promote legislation in order to make it compulsory for the Great Western Railway Company to take over and work the Bishop's Castle railway; and what action he proposes to take in the matter?

Mr. HERBERT MORRISON: I have received a copy of the Resolution to which the hon. and gallant Member refers. I have recently been informed by the Great Western Railway Company that after careful consideration they have come to the conclusion that there are no prospects of developing the traffic which would justify the expenditure which would be required if they were to acquire and work the railway in question, and that, in these circumstances, they are not able to adopt this suggestion. I do not propose to promote legislation for the compulsory transfer of the railway.

INDIGENT BLIND PERSONS (TRAVELLING FACILITIES).

Mr. HORE-BELISHA asked the Minister of Transport whether arrangements can be made with railway companies to afford indigent blind persons in institutions free travelling facilities when going to their homes on leave?

Mr. HERBERT MORRISON: I have no powers in this matter but will, however, communicate with the railway companies and advise the hon. Member of the result.

ROAD REPAIR, RYE.

Sir G. COURTHOPE asked the Minister of Transport whether his attention has been drawn to the condition of the road leading from Rye to Rye Harbour; and what steps he has taken, or will take, to assist the local authorities concerned to render this road fit for traffic?

Mr. HERBERT MORRISON: I am aware that the road has fallen into a bad state of repair owing, I am informed, to financial difficulties of the Harbour Commissioners, who are under statutory obligation to maintain the road. I have intimated that, subject to the making of satisfactory arrangements for the future maintenance of the road by the local authorities, I shall be prepared to consider an application for a grant from the Road Fund towards the net cost to these authorities of an approved scheme of reconstruction. The authorities concerned, namely, the East Sussex County Council and the Rye Town Council, have, however, not yet been able to agree as to the cost of reconstructing that part of the road which is within the borough of Rye, and until agreement is reached I cannot take any further steps to assist them.

ABYSSINIA (ENGLISH CREDITORS).

Mr. REMER asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is aware that judgments for large amounts have been obtained in Abyssinia against the heirs of Haji Abdulla Sadiq by English creditors, and that the Emperor of Abyssinia has refused to allow the judgment to be executed on the ground that the heirs are his wards; if the British Legation have taken any steps to secure payment of these judgments; and what has been the result?

Mr. DALTON: My right hon. Friend has received no information to this effect, but is making inquiries of His Majesty's Minister in Abyssinia.

LIBERIA (SLAVERY).

Mr. LEIF JONES asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in connection with the Liberian report on Slavery, he has received any report from His Majesty's Consul in that country dealing with the allegations of reprisals on the natives who gave evidence before the international commission; and, if so, whether it is proposed to publish such consular despatches?

Mr. DALTON: His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Monrovia reported in November that rumours were current that tribesmen who had given evidence before the commission were having their villages pillaged by Liberian Frontier Force soldiers. He has been instructed to furnish all information available on the subject. The question of publication of these consular despatches is receiving careful consideration.

CHINA (SITUATION).

Mr. DAY asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the present position in China?

Mr. DALTON: I would refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on Wednesday last to the hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Wight (Captain P. Macdonald).

GOVERNMENT SECURITIES (SINKING FUND).

Major HILLS asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer the total amount paid in the last financial year in meeting sinking funds on those Government securities on which a sinking fund is payable according to the terms of issue?

Mr. P. SNOWDEN: The right hon. and gallant Member will find full particulars in the White Paper H.C. 129 of 1930.

GOLD STOCKS.

Commander BELLAIRS asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the stock of gold in sterling held by the five largest holding nations, respectively, on the latest available date?

Mr. P. SNOWDEN: The information is given in the following table:

Stock of Monetary Gold.

Country.	Date.	Stock of Gold.	Sterling equivalent.
United States	7th January, 1931 ...	$4,602,000,000	£945,700,000*
France	9th January, 1931 ...	Frs. 54,109,000,000	£435,600,000
United Kingdom	14th January, 1931 ...	£144,543,000	£144,543,000
Germany	7th January, 1931 ...	Rms. 2,216,000,000	£108,500,000
Spain	10th January, 1931 ...	Ptas. 2,440,000,000	£96,700,000

* Including about £70,000,000 of gold coin estimated to be in circulation.

INDIA.

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald): I beg to move, "That this House do now adjourn."

As the House knows, this Motion is being moved so as to enable a statement to be made to it on the Indian Round Table Conference and to enable the House to discuss it. I should like to begin by emphasising the fact that the present position has been the result of an evolution of stages taken step by step each with its inevitable consequence of a further step being taken later on. I see by the newspapers that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) proposes to make some observations which, I am informed, will be highly critical. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will not forget, however, his own connection with this evolution. He was a member of the Cabinet, he was President of the Board of Trade in 1908 when the King Emperor issued a Proclamation to the Princes and people of India, read by His Excellency the Viceroy in Durbar, at Jodhpur, on 2nd November of that year. In that Proclamation this sentence occurred:

"From the first, the principle of representative institutions began to be gradually introduced, and the time has come when, in the judgment of my Viceroy and Governor-General and others of my counsellors, that principle may be prudently extended."

Later on, when the next step was taken, a Proclamation was made to the people of India, on 23rd December, 1919. The right hon. Gentleman was still sharing joint Cabinet responsibility, being one who shared the responsibility for the issue of the statement. There it is said:

"The Act of 1861 sowed the seed of representative institutions, and the seed was quickened into life by the Act of 1909. The Act which has now become law entrusts elected representatives of the people with a definite share in the Government and points the way to full responsible Government hereafter."

Later in the same Proclamation it was said, talking of the benefits that we have given to India:

"But there is one gift which yet remains and without which the progress of a country cannot be consummated—the right of her people to direct her affairs and safeguard her interests. The defence of India against foreign aggression is a duty of common Imperial interest and pride. The control of her domestic concerns is a burden which India may legitimately aspire to take upon her own shoulders. The burden is too heavy to be borne in full until time and experience have brought the necessary strength; but opportunity will now be given for experience to grow and for responsibility to increase with the capacity for its fulfilment."

Then it goes on:

"Without it, the work of the British in India would have been incomplete. It was, therefore, with a wise judgment that the beginnings of representative institutions were laid many years ago. Their scope has been extended stage by stage until there now lies before us a definite step on the road to responsible government."

If I might trouble the House with one further official declaration, I would quote the ninth Clause of the revised Instrument of Instructions issued to the Governor-General of India by Order-in-Council on 9th March, 1921, and published in India on 8th June that year; and this is how the Clause runs:

"For above all things it is Our will and pleasure that the plans laid by Our Parliament for the progressive realisation of responsible Government in British India as an integral part of our Empire may come to fruition to the end that British India may attain its due place amongst our Dominions."

That is 1921. There is also a speech made by my predecessor, who is opposite me, in May, 1927, in which he said to quote one sentence only:

"Since then great strides towards that goal have been made, and in all the joint activities of the British Commonwealth of Nations India now plays her part, and in the fulness of time we look forward to seeing her in equal partnership with the Dominions."

I quote that to blame nobody, but to praise everybody. Forethought and foresight concluded before the event arose that the event one day would arise and that it would be wisdom one day to recognise the fact. The Conference in regard to which I am reporting as briefly as possible—because the White Paper which has become a blue book is in the hands of hon. Members, and if any information regarding details is required, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, who bore such heavy responsibilities with such success during the Conference, will be prepared to supply it—sat for 10 weeks, from the 12th November until the 19th January.

The Conference was held—let there be no mistake about this—as the result of pledges that were given from time to time while the inquiries were going on in

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India. It is perfectly true that consultations took place and that the Conference as it met was not precisely the same thing as we had in mind when we anticipated that the consultations would take place. I do not make that by way of confession, but we found as the weeks went on that the situation changed, that new currents came into the scheme of events, that certain movements took place in India, and I should have been, and my colleagues with me would have been, blameworthy rather than praiseworthy if we had stuck to the letter of a declaration made in circumstances which no longer existed.

Our purpose was this: First of all, we wanted the Conference, and if, as the days went on, one obstacle after another was put in the way of getting the Conference to meet, it was my business and that of my colleagues to remove those obstacles; and if, with the removal of the obstacles, with a little variation of the plan—the first plan was a Joint Committee of this House and another place, we having made up our minds in the main as to what we proposed, then, having some Indian representatives coming over here, not so much in a negotiating as perhaps in a consultative capacity—if that changed, then I plead guilty to supporting the change, but my guilt consists in a variation of the letter in order to secure effectively the operation of the spirit of the Conference.

I must say, before going further, how much everybody in this House, whether they are opposed to the business of the Conference or not, ought to show their thanks and gratitude to the men and women who came from India to take part in it. They came at very great risk, not only to their reputation; they came at great inconvenience and great loss. Everyone who had the pleasure—and I am perfectly certain that I am speaking in this respect for those who sit opposite me—of co-operating with them held them in higher and higher esteem as the days went on and as we got into closer and closer grips with the tremendous problem which the framing of a constitution for India presents. We ought also to thank our experts. I have never worked with a more efficient body of men than those, both from the India Office and in the Indian Civil Service, who were especially told off to keep us in touch with realities and to prevent us from making ideas get out of contact with experience.

Then our raw material was what is known as the Simon Report. I have already said, and said in the Conference—I have nothing to withdraw from what I said, and I will repeat it as often as may be necessary—that for that Report India owes a debt which India, as time goes on, will be in a better, and still better, position to appreciate. On that Report we had the benefit of the comments of the Government of India. We also had the benefit of reports put in and advice given by the various provincial Governments like the Punjab Provincial Government regarding the very intricate problem of minority representation in the Punjab. We also had the Indian Central Committee's report and the Nehru report, and without these preparations, one and all, it would have been absolutely impossible for us to have conducted the business of the Conference. The purpose of the Conference was to get, first of all, by personal contact, a conviction put into the hearts of those Indians, at any rate, who came here, that not only were the Government but that Parliament, the three parties and both Houses, were honestly endeavouring to meet the legitimate expectations of India.

4.0 p.m.

We, also, by this Conference had the great advantage of stating across conference tables the real problems involved in the further advance by ourselves hearing the claims of India put by some of the most able advocates India has got to-day, and it gave also the opportunity of expressing our views, of putting the problem from our point of view, and of putting into the common pool the experiences which we had of governing India, so that they might be mixed up with the experiences which the Indians had of being governed by us. In that way things—not things that had not been considered by either side, but important considerations that had been considered by both sides from their point of view, and only from their point of view—assumed different relative importance when the problem was brought down to the actual realities of building up architectural ideas in the form of stone and lime, so to speak.

The third advantage was this. We did not meet to frame a constitution—make no mistake about that. It was never the intention of anybody to sit down and draft word after word, line after line, clause after clause a constitution, but what we meant to do, and what, I think, we have been very successful in doing, was to agree upon the principle which in advance should be applied to Indian government, and which should be made the foundation of any constitution that should ultimately be granted. In order to do that work, we met at a plenary open meeting of the whole Conference, then the whole Conference met in committee and divided into sub-committees, of which there were nine. If hon. Members have read the Blue Book published at the end of last week, they will see in that book the reports of these sub-committees. I am sorry we were not able to give more, but I can assure the House that what we have been able to produce in the short time at our disposal is, to the best of my belief, all that is essential for a judgment upon the work of the Conference.

Hon. Members who have read that Blue Book will have noted that it is clearly stated that everything in it is provisional. The stability and the success of the work that is to be done depends upon how the structure as a whole is to be built up. The general belief—I confess that I share it wholeheartedly, after having gone through the business of the Conference and done its work, and not only publicly, but also privately, discussed with the representative people in that delightfully informal and candid way one can do round the fireside or across the fireside—I believe most sincerely that that structure can be built up. It is a new structure. In the course of our studies, we have had to get hold of many constitutions—the Japanese constitution, the German constitution before the War, the constitution of the United States, our own Dominion constitutions, in order to find out how it was possible practically to produce something that would work, and yet would meet the extraordinary variety and novel requirements of Indian conditions.

I believe that it can be done, but the first thing in order to enable it to be done was to remove all the Indian problems from the field of suspicion, to get India to accept with candour and good will and to get them—at any rate, those whom we could influence—to see exposed in all its naked weakness the sort of policy which has been pursued in India for so long, the policy of so-called passive resistance, but which is only a polite and a sort of moral cloak for what we have been accustomed to meet for many, many years in the West, and have always called it by the honest name of lawlessness. To remove all that to a field of Conference, and start co-operative negotiations on a basis of mutual understanding, a body of men, including princes on the one hand and representatives of the depressed classes on the other, Hindus and Moslems on the one hand, trade union leaders on the other, met together, so far as I know for the first time in Indian negotiations. At this moment, they are on their way to India, the sworn champions of the work done, convinced of our sincerity, advocates of cessation of strife, and sworn to do their best to inaugurate a regime of good will and to co-operate to find solutions of the various problems which presented themselves to us at St. James's Palace.

The Government are now considering how the work is to be carried on. I am sorry to say that I cannot offer any suggestions to-day. I have already seen the Viceroy-elect, and I hope that if there is anything like good fortune, some few hours of leisure may be given to approach the leaders of both parties with suggestions as to how the work can be carried on, for I feel that it would be one of the greatest calamities imaginable if that very useful and admirable co-operation which existed between ourselves and the representatives of parties were broken in the future stages of the negotiations. When I say that, I am not implicating any hon. Members opposite. We do not always agree, but I think we all strove to show a very good example. I do hope it will be possible to carry on that co-operation on the same independent and non-commital lines as the co-operation which was carried on through the Conference. The first formidable question was the question of responsibility at the centre. Speaking for myself, before the Conference met, after a study of what had been said in India, I had come to the conclusion that, even if British India

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alone came into the confederation, or the question had to be considered by us for British India alone, we should have had, by hook or by crook, to devise some means of giving some responsibility to the central Government. Nothing would have been accepted without that. The question was, Was it possible to give it? If it was possible, it ought to be given. If it was not possible, then no agreement was possible.

There was no difficulty about the Provinces. Hon. Members will find the provincial sketch drawn out by Committee No. 2, the report of whose work they will find on pages 41 to 44 of the Blue Book. There it is proposed to establish ordinary representative institutions, and, provisionally, to increase the seats in the legislatures of the Provinces, and lower the franchise provisionally—it is not an agreed figure, because the Indians are pressing for a little more—but to lower the franchise so that it would be increased by anything between 10 and 25 per cent. Then, the executive shall be held jointly responsible to the legislature, just on the model of the ordinary western representative institutions, but the central responsibility was the problem. Before we had met many hours, a statement made by the representative of the Princes removed a great deal of the difficulty. The Princes declared that they were now prepared to come into the federation. Thus we were not merely dealing with British India, but with the States as well. Then the central legislature would be representative of three elements—British India, the States, and the Governor-General representing the Crown in so far as his being custodian of certain reserved subjects makes it necessary that his advisers on those reserved subjects should have access to the central legislature.

The question arose as to how the central legislature could be composed and how elected. We could not pursue that to an end, but proposals were noted, and here again the discussions showed, I think, that with a little more time, so that various alternatives might be proposed and devices suggested, an agreement can be made. Hon. Members will find that discussed in considerable detail in the report of sub-committee No. 1, over which Lord Sankey presided with such conspicuous success. Then the question of the powers of the central body arose. I will content myself by referring hon. Members to the schedule of subjects which they will find in two parts of the Blue Book: first of all pages 10 and 11, and then, in relation to the provincial legislatures as well, pages 28 to 38. It is quite obvious that the powers of the central legislature, when it is created, must first of all be largely a matter of cataloguing and scheduling, and the first attempt has been made in these pages of the Blue Book.

Then the question of the reserved subjects arose. It is perfectly obvious that Defence is a matter which must be reserved, certainly for the time being; External Relations is another. This, again, involves the relation of the responsible advisers of the Governor-General to the central legislature and the central executive. That is another little complexity of constitution, but it has been met before. Fortunately, there are a few precedents for that. There are various ways in which it can be dealt with. Constitutions with precisely the same provisions to meet precisely the same problems are in working order, and have been in working order. To all intents and purposes, so far as machinery is concerned—though the constitutional spirit and purpose are different—it is akin to the provisions that were made by the pre-War German constitution, when ministers, without being members of the Reichstag, could sit on elevated platforms at the end of the chamber and address the assembly.

There is a kind of reserved subject which is not fully a reserved subject, though it is rather in the nature of one. There are subjects which have to be determined by safeguards. The first of these is finance. I am dealing with the central authority. Obviously, if there are reserved services like Defence under the control of the Governor-General, the Governor-General must be secured in the finance that is required for the exercise of his authority as the custodian of those reserved subjects. So the first condition of the transfer of the responsibility for finance to the executive has regard to the guarantees and safeguards that have to be put in with regard to the finance of reserved services. Methods for doing that are accordingly in the report. There

is another group of financial guarantees. The Secretary of State has undertaken obligations, loans and such things, in India's interest and as the representative of India, and these obligations must be covered by way of a safeguard.

Then there is the general position of confidence and credit. It is essential that in the transfer to India of any form or any amount of financial responsibility, care must be taken that the transfer is not to be accompanied by a loss of confidence or a damage to credit. Otherwise, India will suffer very severely in the course of the transfer. Here, again, the proposal is made in the work of the sub-committee concerned with Federal structure that a Reserve Bank outside political control should be established, because such a bank, we are advised by our financial advisers, will tend to maintain the credit of India and shield it from the suffering which it might have to undergo if any sort of panic or lack of confidence arose regarding its financial administration.

There are some general safeguards—the maintenance of tranquility, law and order, and so on. A great deal is being made about this. I see that some of our critics are placing far too much emphasis upon paper provisions. There are such safeguards in operation, at least in the background, in every free constitution in the world. We have them here. All that the safeguard amounts to is that in the event of an emergency power must be in somebody's hands to protect the State and to see that law and order are not allowed to go to rack and ruin without any attempt being made to keep them stable. This is not a safeguard suggested to be imposed upon India because we cannot trust her, as I see some of the Indian papers are trying to make out. This is a safeguard transported from every free constitution, where it exists in some shape or form, into the Indian constitution, and it is not meant to be used in ordinary times. It is meant simply to be latent in the background, and we impressed upon the Indians who were here that on no account were they to allow Indian opinion to assume that that was going to be an active power exercised by the Governor-General, but that the less it was used, and the more it was almost forgotten, the better Great Britain would be pleased with regard to the success of the working of the constitution.

There are certain special problems. It has been proposed by every community, from the Mohammedans to the tiniest minority of Indian Christians, that when the constitution has been drafted, it must contain a declaration of the rights of the individual irrespective of caste, creed, community or anything else, and, if that declaration is made, there must be some reserved power, some safeguard given to the governors of the provinces or to the Governor-General of India. Subject to these provisions, a central executive responsible to the legislature will be established and recognised.

One other great misunderstanding is, I see, being made a good deal of. It is stated that this executive, this ministry, is to be appointed by the Governor-General, and we are told by some of our critics in India that that means that he is going to do this of his own free will. Those of us who have sat on the Front Opposition Benches and who are sitting here, know perfectly well that we are appointed by His Majesty the King, and that is all that is meant by this. The Governor-General shall appoint these ministers in precisely the same way as His Majesty himself appoints his Government here, and to secure that, there will be instructions in the Instrument of Instructions issued to the Governor-General as soon as this condition of affairs is in being in India. Therefore, it is possible to create at the centre a legislature and an executive.

Certain subjects will be reserved for the time being, and there must be certain safeguards; and most unfortunately, in the enumeration of the safeguards which must be there, the substance of the safeguards and the activity of the Clauses enumerated give them an importance which, as a matter of working fact, they will never have, unless the whole constitution is going to break down. On the reserved subjects, on the conditions imposed on finance for instance, let there be no mistake about this; there must be certainty so as to prevent risk—that will be only during the transitional period, and safeguards and conditions must be imposed which will save Indian credit from panic.

[The Prime Minister.]

Another group of problems which faced us and which will have to be dealt with in the constitution consists of the minority problems—the community problems. These divide themselves into two divisions—the general problem of minorities and of various communities, and the provincial aspects of that problem. This is going to be one of the most difficult problems that we have to face. It is a very curious problem, and, if hon. Members who are interested in these constitutional and political points care to read carefully the Minorities and Sub-Committee's report, and certain parts of Sub-Committee No. 1, where this question is dealt with, I promise them one of the most fascinatingly interesting studies which they have undertaken. It is full of profound interest. Of course, it is historical. You build up the legislature, as ours is built up, by constituencies. The voting in constituencies is not to take place, and cannot at the moment take place, in a way that the voting in our constituencies takes place, where you might have an aristocrat as one candidate and a working man as another. You would have your constituencies divided up into sections—a certain number of working-class constituencies where nobody but working-men could run as candidates, a certain number of, say, Church of England constituencies, where nobody but a communicating member of the Church of England could run, and so on until you had filled up the 100 per cent. of your constituencies in that way. Then, before any election took place, it would be perfectly certain that the Church of England people would have, say, 15 per cent. of seats, the working-class, say, 25 per cent., and so on.

That is the simplest and crudest form of claim that is made on behalf of the various communities. That means that if every constituency is to be earmarked to a community or interest there is no room left for the growth of what we consider to be purely political organisations which would comprehend all communities, all creeds, all classes and all conditions of birth. That is one of the problems which has to be faced, because if India is going to develop a robust political life there must be room for national political parties based upon conceptions of India's interests and not upon conceptions regarding the well being of any field that is smaller or less comprehensive than the whole of India. Then there is a modified proposal regarding that. A proposal is made that there should not be community constituencies with a community register, but that there should be a common register in the constituencies, and that with the common register a certain percentage of representation should be guaranteed to certain communities. It is the first proposal in a somewhat more attractive and democratic form, but, still, essentially the same.

Another problem that faces us from that point of view is: If your legislature is to be composed of these water-tight compartments, these community-tight compartments, how are you going to appoint your executive? The claim is put in that the executive—that is, the administration, the Cabinet—shall also be divided into water-tight compartments. Now, that is the most fascinatingly difficult problem that is in front of us and of the Indian constitution makers. When you bring it down to the provinces, there are two great provinces peculiarly subject to this demand of the communities—the Punjab where there are three important communities, the Mussalmen, the Hindus, and the Sikhs; and Bengal, where the contest is between the Mussalmen and the Hindus. The trouble comes in here, curiously enough. Take the Punjab, for instance. The Mussalman population is 55 per cent. of the Punjab population, but owing to the qualifications that are required in order to get your name on the register the Mussalmen registers show only 46 per cent. The Mussalmen are poor and are not qualified to the same extent as the Hindus.

Mr. FOOT: And there are more children.

The PRIME MINISTER: Yes, but we do not franchise children. But there it is; and the claim there is that the representation in the provincial legislatures should not be the representation as shown by the register but the representation as shown by the population. Then the question of weightage comes in, and so on; and it is very difficult to convince these very dear and delightful people that if you give one community weightage you cannot create the weightage out of nothing, but have to take it from somebody else. When they discover that they become

very confused indeed, and find that they are up against a brick wall. Here, again, I am profoundly convinced that an agreement can be made which will be satisfactory to all sides. As a matter of fact, in the case of the Punjab I got it down to a difference of only one seat, and it has never before been so close as that. If we had had more time it is probable that we should have succeeded in reaching a settlement.

I am afraid that the House, especially if it has read the Blue Book, will feel that I have said quite enough. There are other questions of detail I need not go into. About Burma we have accepted the principle of separation, and it is going to be given effect to by careful inquiry and an adjustment of claims. The North-West Province will, under the proposals of the Committee, become a Governor's province, with certain modifications. The creation of Sind as an independent province will be made if an expert committee on finance report that it can be done. I would like to draw the attention of the House to the Resolution on page 72 of the Blue Book. It is the only Resolution carried at the Conference. When it was all over, when all reports had been put in and considered and recorded, the Conference unanimously—I believe there was one delegate who said that he did not quite agree to something, but I am really right in saying "unanimously"—carried this Resolution:

"These Reports, provisional though they are, together with the recorded notes attached to them, afford, in the opinion of the Conference, material of the highest value for use in the framing of a Constitution for India, embodying as they do a substantial measure of agreement on the main ground-plan, and many helpful indications of the points of detail to be further pursued. And the Conference feels that arrangements should be made to pursue without interruption the work upon which it has been engaged, including the provision in the Constitution of adequate safeguards for the Mussalmans, Depressed Classes, Sikhs, and all other important minorities."

I think that is a very satisfactory conclusion to the Conference. The general survey has been made, and the lines laid down for filling in details, and so I ask the House to agree to the Government pursuing the problems in detail in consultation with representative Indians and constitutional experts. The stage is almost reached—I am not at all sure that I should not be quite justified in saying that it has actually been reached—when we should begin our plans with trial drafts.

If we refuse, supposing we do not do this, what are the prospects? Repression, and nothing but repression, and it is a very uncomfortable repression; a kind of repression from which we shall get neither credit nor success. It is the repression of the masses of the people, the great proportion of these masses being women and children. It is the repression not of organisations and not of bodies; it will develop into the repression of the whole of the population. If you are prepared to march our soldiers from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin—then refuse to allow us to go on. If you are prepared to subdue by force not only the people but the spirit of the time—then refuse to allow us to proceed. If we are prepared to stage, for the whole world to behold, a failure of our political genius, and at the same time provide it with a spectacle which will bring our name and our fame very low indeed—then refuse to allow us to go on. If, on the other hand, you wish to bind India to you by bonds of confidence, to make her happy within your Empire and Commonwealth, if you wish to hear her praise you in gratitude and remain with you in pride, then accept the work that has been done by the Conference, and instruct the Government to proceed with it to a complete conclusion.

Sir SAMUEL HOARE: I agree with every word the Prime Minister said at the beginning of his speech about the Indian members of the Conference. They came at some risk to themselves, many of them at great sacrifice. Week after week they sat side by side with us, the members of the British Parliamentary Delegation, freely and frankly discussing the questions of the East and West. Speaking for myself, I can honestly say that I never took part in more interesting and in more exacting discussions. It was a great privilege, and it was also a great profit to me, as a Member of the House of Commons, to sit there day after day round a table with our Indian colleagues discussing all these questions of the greatest complexity and the greatest importance, just as much to ourselves as to India and just as much to India as to ourselves. I do not believe there ever was a more remarkable assembly. There,

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in the gilded rooms of St. James's Palace, with the pictures of Hanoverian Kings and British Admirals around us, East and West sat day after day discussing these urgent and difficult questions. One day it was a Burman in pink silk demanding the separation of Burma from India. Another day it was a brilliant and beautiful Mussalman lady of family, only just released from purdah, putting the case of the women of India. A third day it was a well known Pathan leader of the North-West Frontier Province, putting the case of his sturdy fellow-tribesmen, claiming in very picturesque and also in very racy language the equality of status for the men whom he represented in the Conference. "Sir," he said to us—and I cannot help quoting one of his wise observations to the House of Commons:

> "We are a small people and you are a great Empire, but a flea in a man's trousers is a very tiresome thing, even though that man be a great man."

I took that observation to heart and certain other very interesting remarks which he made in the course of the discussion. If I had time, I should like to give the House some more of them, but I must restrict myself to what I, and my colleagues of the Conservative delegation, regard as the main work of the Conference. First and foremost, I would say that the great importance of the Conference was that over a long period of weeks it concentrated public attention in Great Britain, in the Empire and in India on questions that very often had not received the attention of public opinion which they deserved. I do not think that we can exaggerate the services which members of the Conference performed by this day after day concentration on these difficult and complicated questions of the problem of the relations of India and Great Britain.

When I come to the more detailed work of the Conference, when, for instance, I come to the work of the committees, there, I think, we can say that the main results of the Conference are three. First of all there is the fact, the importance of which we cannot exaggerate, of an all-India Federation emerging, not as a dim and distant ideal, but as a practicable programme from which every constitutional advance should start. So far as I know there was not a single member of the Conference, British or Indian, who did not accept an all-India Federation as the basis of the future Government of India. I think the House of Commons should feel some satisfaction at that; they should feel great satisfaction at the fact that, while the immediate cause of this advance was a patriotic move made by the Indian Princes, the ultimate cause of this advance was the report of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon) and his fellow commissioners. They made an all-India Federation the very basis of all their work, and if they had known the attitude of the Indian Princes, no doubt they would have filled in their framework in greater detail. Without the work done by the right hon. and learned Gentleman and his fellow commissioners, any such development as we saw at the Round Table Conference would have been quite impossible. Not a day passed, not a speech was made in which, consciously or unconsciously, we members of the Conference, British and Indian, were not availing ourselves of all that mass of connected detail, all those well-balanced judgments with which the report of the Statutory Commission is filled from beginning to end.

The second important fact that emerged from the work of these committees was the fact, again accepted by every member of the Conference, that we were agreed upon the introduction of responsible government in the provinces. That was a great step in advance, a great move forward in carrying out the pledge of responsible government, made on behalf of the British Government in 1917. There were some members of the Conference who somewhat depreciated this advance, and who seemed to take it for granted and as a matter of little concern. I disagree with that view, and I am sure that when once responsible government is introduced in the provinces, we shall see political changes far greater than many of us imagine in the field of Indian life. So far from this advance being taken for granted, I would venture to say that only a few months ago a good many of my hon. Friends would have been nervous at making so great an extension. Here again the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley, and his report, convinced us. The Conference took an important step further, and con-

firmed our conviction that it is safe to make this experiment provided that the Government at the centre remains a stable and effective Government.

Then there was the third of the important results of our committee work, the fact that every member of the Conference, British and Indian, to a greater or less degree, accepted the necessity of safeguards in the interests of India just as much as in the interests of Great Britain. It is a very significant fact that every member of the Conference accepted the necessity of including safeguards and reservations in any new Indian constitution. In a minute or two, I will go into some further details on this point, but at the moment it is most important to observe that, at the very outset of our further discussions about the details of an Indian constitution, every member of the Conference, British and Indian alike, accepted the necessity of some safeguards and some reservations.

I think I have said enough to show the House that in the minds of the Conservative members of the delegation there was a measure of general agreement. Within a wide framework there was this substantial measure of general acquiescence, but I say particularly in this wide framework, and I say particularly general agreement and general acquiescence, for, when we come to study the committee's reports in detail, any hon. Member will see at once that in every direction there are doubts, if not points of disagreement, at any rate points that are not yet settled. There are serious questions that have been scarcely yet discussed, and let me give the House the most important. There are very serious questions that are yet unsettled, some of which were scarcely discussed in detail at all. When the Conference ended, although there was general agreement about the necessity for some safeguards, there was still much difference of opinion over the actual safeguards. The constitution and the relations of the two Federal Houses had been neither agreed upon nor settled. Around the composition of the executive, there was gathered a cloud of obscure and undecided problems. Among the disputed points which were referred to subsequent inquiries was the difficult question of paramountcy which had not been discussed at all by the Conference.

Then there is the question which overrides any other question in India and is fundamental to any constitutional change of any kind at all; that is, the minority question, and that failed to reach a settlement. I mention these facts not with any intention of blaming or criticising the work of the Conference. The Conference lasted only 10 weeks, and it is impossible to settle all these great and complicated questions in so short a time. It has taken in the past months and often years to frame constitutions far less complicated than a constitution for an all-India Federation. None the less, while we make full admission that within the time at our disposal it was impossible to settle all these questions, the fact must be taken constantly into account that many serious questions that are vital to any future settlement are unsolved.

So far as the Conservative delegation are concerned, we made our position time after time as clear we could. We said, quite frankly and with no reservations in our mind, that until the question was a more definite question, we could not give a more definite answer. There were critics who said we meant one thing, and other critics said we meant another thing. A third lot of critics said we meant nothing at all, and that our minds were merely confused and obscure. It was nothing of the kind. Our minds were in many respects perfectly clear, and particularly clear upon this point, that unless the facts are faced and we give up talking in generalities and being satisfied with phrases, there can be no constitutional advance at all. I cannot help remembering a very wise observation that was made by William James when he was finishing his well-known book on "The Principles of Psychology." He wrote to his brother, Henry James:

5.0 p.m.

> "I have to forge every sentence in the teeth of irreducible and stubborn facts."

So in the case of India; we have to forge any new Constitution for India in the face of stubborn and irreducible facts. There is the fact, for instance, of the size of India—a veritable continent, peopled with scores of races and religions. How is it possible to treat a great continent of this size and complexity as if it were our small, thickly populated industrial island? There is the fact that in the East, even more than

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in the West, and particularly in India, so long as the minorities question is not yet settled, there is always a danger of sudden conflagration, and that there is, therefore, a peculiar need for a strong and stable Government. There is the third fact that British ways and Indian ways have crossed each other for so many generations that, even if you tried, you could never separate our fortunes from India's, or India's fortunes from ours. On the other hand, there is the fact, which we should be foolish to ignore, that the East is changing under our eyes, and changing, perhaps, even faster than the West; and that a Constitution that fits the needs of to-day certainly will not fit the needs of the years to come.

Let me give the House one or two concrete examples of the kind of difficulties that we have to face—the kind of difficulties that, if we do not face them, will create an almost insurmountable obstacle in our path. I will take the two cases mentioned particularly by the Prime Minister—the case of Indian defence and the case of Indian finance. The case of Indian defence reacts at almost every turn upon the Indian constitutional problem. India to-day, as everyone knows, is dependent upon Imperial troops for her defence. As long as she is dependent on Imperial troops, those Imperial troops must remain solely and exclusively under the command of the Imperial authorities. As long as they remain under the Imperial authorities, a very difficult constitutional problem is created in India, which makes it quite impossible to have the kind of unitary Government that we know here as Cabinet Government transplanted in every detail into the Indian constitution. That is a fact that we have not created for the purpose of blocking Indian advance; it is a fact that is inherent in the problem. Until it is faced, the obstacles in the path of advance will be insurmountable, or nearly insurmountable.

Then there is the question of finance. There, again, when we say that we must go very warily in the matter of finance, we are not creating unnecessary obstacles for the purpose of blocking Indian advance. Indian finance is not a political question at all. It is of no avail to convince the politicians that such-and-such a change may be undertaken. The people whom you have to convince are the business men, the bankers, the financiers. You have to convince them that the change that you are making is not going to injure the credit of India, and is not going to be the cause of a flight from the rupee, a flight of capital and of currency from India, with the result that you will be faced with economic catastrophe in India and put back Indian advance for a generation.

So it is also with what are known as the reserved powers of the Viceroy. There, again, we are not creating imaginary difficulties; the difficulties are inherent in the problem; and, so long as there are in India minorities who are fearful of their position, so long must there be an impartial authority with powers in reserve able to safeguard them. I go so far as to say that, if there were no Viceroy, if there were no reserved powers as there are to-day, you would have to create a Viceroy and you would have to create reserved powers for that express purpose.

I have mentioned these hard facts, for I am quite certain that they have to be faced, and that we shall make no advance if we put our heads in the sand and imagine that they do not exist They are very formidable facts; they are facts, as I have said, inherent in the position of India; they are facts that have emerged in 150 years of close connection between India and Great Britain. Indeed, they are so stubborn, they are so incontrovertible, that I am quite certain that they will only be solved in the spirit of good will and co-operation, and with frank admission that they do exist and that each of us, British and Indian alike, has a very good case.

I should shudder to see this question become the pawn of party politics. I have been for 21 years in this House, and, looking back, I remember my early days when I first came into the House, when the Home Rule battle was passing through its most bitter stages. I should be very sorry to see the Indian question go the way of the Irish question. I should be very sorry to see one party definitely pledged to one line of policy, and the opposition definitely pledged to reverse it. We may be able to manage our

domestic affairs on those lines, but I am quite certain that we cannot thus manage the affairs of a great Empire.

I venture to say, first of all, that, if we are to solve this very difficult problem, if we are to surmount the very hard facts some of which I have mentioned this afternoon, we must have the spirit of good will and the spirit of co-operation here at home in Great Britain. We must also have a spirit of good will and co-operation in India. I would not say a word to-day that would make the conduct of affairs in India more difficult than it is at present, but I would venture to say, particularly, after the good will that was created during the sittings of the Round Table Conference, that I do hope that all men and women of good will in India will now come forward into the forefront of the battle and make their voices heard, and will maintain the spirit of good will that I believe was begun during the sittings of the Round Table Conference. Too often in the past—I am not now thinking specially of India—men of good will have been stampeded by the extremists. I hope that that will not be the case now in India, but that the men who have gone back there will make their voices heard and gather round them a great army of men and women of good will from one end of India to the other.

So far as we Conservatives are concerned, that is, so far as I am entitled to speak for them, I would say that we are realists. We are not interested in words and phrases; we are prepared to face the facts. We do not like making promises that we are not sure of being able to fulfil, and we shudder at generalities that we do not always understand. But, while we recognise the great changes that have taken place, and are taking place, in the East, there are certain solemn obligations that we could not on any account abandon. It is better, on a point of this kind, to be quite clear; let me, therefore, state these obligations as I understand them.

The obligation of the defence of India still rests upon us. Foreign affairs and international obligations must still be controlled by the Crown. In the interests of India, no less than in the interests of Great Britain, internal security and financial stability must be effectively safeguarded. In the interests of humanity, the pledges that we have given for the protection of minorities must still be our solemn obligation. There must be no unfair economic and commercial discrimination against British traders. The rights of the Services recruited by the Secretary of State must be preserved.

Lastly, whatever Constitution may emerge must be maintained upon a sure and stable foundation. These are our fundamental interests in India, and we should be false to our whole history and to our whole national character if we abandoned them. Satisfy our legitimate demands in these respects; show us that a Constitution for all India can be framed with effective safeguards, that the system of government will have a reasonable chance of working and succeeding, and we shall not split hairs about words or oppose proposals because of mere phrases, or quibble about details that do not matter. We wish no less than any party in the House to see an all-India Federation. We wish no less than any party in the House to avail ourselves freely and fully of Indian genius in framing any changes in the system of Indian government. We wish no less than any party in the House to see a peaceful and contented India in which British and Indians will be working side by side with no feeling of inequality of status between them. We no less than any party in the House wish to solve the greatest problem that has ever faced the political world, the joining of an eastern Continent in friendly partnership with a western government in a world-wide Empire.

Our task in India, so far from being accomplished, is only now beginning its most vivid and varied chapter. So far from abandoning our obligations and bringing to an end the work of a century and a half, we are entering upon a new phase in which partnership must be made the moving principle and co-operation the basis of our every action. Though we may be faced with a critical period in the immediate years before us, though there are irreconcilable extremists in India with whom there can be no peace, I am certain that we shall pull through, and that we shall live to see the partnership of which I have spoken. More and more we shall realise that we need the help of Indians, just as Indians more and more will realise that they will need the help

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of us. There is a striking passage in Sir Arnold Wilson's recent history of the War in Mesopotamia. He had met a party of pilgrims and it was thus that they discoursed with each other. "If the Turks lose," said one pilgrim, "courage will disappear from the world; if the Germans lose, science; if the English lose, there will be no more justice on the earth." "If that be true," said another, "the English will win, because God will not permit justice to disappear from the world." Of all the gifts that we have made to India, justice has been the greatest, justice not only in the sense of the law courts, but justice between man and man and between community and community. It is justice, friendly and sympathetic, but none the less practical and informal, justice to India, justice to our solemn obligations alike which will guide as through the wilderness of difficult problems and make us win, as the pilgrim said we should win the War.

Mr. FOOT: I rise with a great deal of diffidence to express the views of those who sit upon these benches on the subject in which I and my hon. Friend upon my left (Sir R. Hamilton) have been concerned for some time in the past months. If I may allow myself the privilege of a quotation following upon the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken, I should like to quote the words of the greatest Member of this House who ever brought his mind to bear upon Indian affairs, who said he had felt himself obliged by the research of years to wind himself into the inmost recesses and labyrinths of Indian detail. The Blue Book that has been presented to the House is one that gives us a great deal of detail. It contains something like a hundred secondary and subsidiary questions, and there is not one of them that would not deserve and justify the attention of a whole sitting of this House. I am well aware, as has already been pointed out, that in the scheme put before the House, in the proposals made at the Round Table Conference, there are all kinds of anomalies, but of all the anomalies there is no anomaly so great as the government of India by the British people. It is a very wonderful thing. I notice that last week the Prime Minister of Mysore, in a letter to the "Times,' said he believed the association of the British and the Indian peoples had been brought about by the providence of God. None the less it is, I suppose, the greatest anomaly that the world have ever seen.

We have all this detail set out in the Blue Book, but I ask to be permitted to deal with the broad outline of the case rather than with the details that are submitted to us here. I am well aware that the Debate is being carried on at a disadvantage. In the first place, many who will take part in it have not the report of the speeches made at the sub-committees, and, in the next place, I think we are too near the Conference to judge fully of its effect. I think, however, we can already judge that this matter is, above all other matters that come before the House, one of supreme importance. In my opinion, all our domestic disputes are in comparison no more than dust in the balance. The difference between a friendly India and an alienated India is a difference so great that there is no statesman in the country who can appreciate and no economist who can compute what that difference means. I begin by paying my tribute to the Prime Minister. Speaking for my colleague and myself, as well as the two other leading members of the British delegation, I can only say I have watched with pride his handling of a very difficult and a delicate problem. He had very special qualifications for this position. In past years he has written books upon India. He has always had keen sympathies with the aspirations of India. He was himself elected president of the National Congress in India—a great honour and a distinction for a Briton. Further, I should like to apply to him the words:

"And who knoweth whether thou art come to the Kingdom for such a time as this?"

He had his difficulties and his apprehensions. Sometimes I think the proposals of the Conference have been shamefully attacked in this country. He brought the ship into harbour although it almost went down within sight of land. I know what his difficulties and apprehensions were at the end, and he is to be congratulated upon the result. If I may speak with great presumption, if I were in his place I would allow nothing to interfere with the completion of this task. I would accept any rebuff, whether it came from above the Gang-

way or below. Unless I had against me the direct vote of the House, I would be determined that this task, supremely important above all others, should be carried through. There is none so well qualified to carry it through as himself. I hope his name will be associated with this great achievement. I think he can have patience in this matter and wait until the work is done, and he will be entitled to say:—

"Measure not the work
Until the day's out and the labour done,
Then bring your gauges."

I should also like, speaking for my colleague and myself, to pay my tribute to Lord Sankey. Not for the first time we have had a foremost lawyer also a foremost champion of liberty. It is not for me to pay my tribute to the Secretary of State for India, but he has been content to efface himself if the work could be advanced. I also pay my tribute to the "Times" newspaper. I notice that Lord Morley, in his "Recollections," says the "Times" always follows Indian affairs with remarkable attention and knowledge. I think two or three articles in the "Times" newspaper have had a wonderfully steadying effect upon the public mind. I do not want to be dragged aside by the interruption that was made; but it is rather remarkable that a great paper that can gauge a sub-continent has failed to take accurate measurements of the right hon. Gentleman below me.

There is one other name, and this Debate would be unworthily carried through if that name did not receive great consideration. I refer to the right hon. Gentlemen the Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon). I am satisfied that but for him this Conference, even if it had been held, would not have suceeded. I do not believe it is posible for us to make any adequate acknowledgment of the sacrifice and the effort which was made by my right hon. Friend and his colleagues. He carried on in spite of difficulties, which were not of his creation, but which were faced with great courage. He will be speaking later in the Debate. It is only by his generosity that I am speaking now. I can only say that I or anyone on these benches feel that when we come to deal with this question we are not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoe. I believe that in years to come India, as well as this country, will put the right hon. Gentleman's name very high in the record of the achievements of this time.

Page 72 of the Blue Book gives the resolution of the Conference in which it is suggested that the work is to be carried on without interruption. I should like to underline those words "without interruption." I believe it to be of the greatest importance that in this matter there should be no delay. I do not think there is any country in the world across whose politics there could not be written the words "Too late." I believe if the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms had come two years earlier we should have had a very different story. I am sorry the Conference itself was not held two years ago. Again, the great statesman to whom I referred just now said:

"If there is any eminent criterion which above all the rest distinguishes a wise Government from an administration weak and improvident it is this—well to know the best time and manner of yielding what it is impossible to keep."

It is not merely doing it in time, but doing it in good faith. I believe India lays more emphasis on good faith than upon anything else. It is good faith that gave Lord Ripon an honoured name in Indian memories. It is good faith that has made the present Viceroy a most honoured man in India. He is a Conservative. It is true that he has Liberal blood in his veins. I believe he is a grandson of one who was a Liberal Secretary of State for India. To me, at any rate, a most marked feature of the Conference was the continnued and spontaneous applause which was given as soon as the name of Lord Irwin was mentioned. We have every assurance that after his fine service has been completed, the work will be continued by another whose name has been honourably associated with India as the Governor of Madras and the Governor of Bombay. We wish for him, in taking upon his shoulders this very heavy burden, not only a time of personal happiness, but great prosperity in the country over which he will be head.

I ask that the Prime Minister and those who are associated with him be not disturbed by the opposition which may be forthcoming. I think that some of the criticism which we have had has been unworthy of this country. I will only stay to speak of the criticism which

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was made by Lord Rothermere only a few days ago. When these men came to this country they came at the invitation of the Viceroy. They were the honoured guests of this country. They were men who came in spite of obloquy and boycott. They were men who came taking their political lives in their hands, and Lord Rothermere, only a week ago, with that grave old-world courtesy, which recalls the Vere de Veres and the Plantagenets, spoke of them as being half educated. They were men who would have graced any assembly in the world, and he spoke of them as being nominees of small groups of job-hunting politicians. If I were an Indian and believed that those opinions were representative of the mind of this country, I would join the extreme section of the Communist party, and I would not be content with Government within the Empire. I would go in for total separation, if I believed that that represented the British mind. I am glad to think that that sentiment is repudiated. I think that we are entitled to ask not only Lord Rothermere but all responsible critics who may be speaking in this House what is their alternative policy? What would they have said in reply to the statement which was made by Sir Tej Bahadhur Sapru when he brought to an end a speech, which, in a certain sense, may influence the future of the world? He stated the case of his country and the difficulties with which they were confronted, and if the critics of those proposals condemn them, it is right that we should ask, "What is your alternative, and what other answer can we give to the delegates who came across the sea?"

If it is to be force, all we answer is, that authority in India is off the rails. In this country the only thing that assists authority is the fact that the desire of the common people is behind it. I may go to a football match where I may see twenty or thirty thousand people and a couple of dozen constables. How is it that a couple of dozen constables can keep 30,000 people in order? It is because 99 out of every 100 people present want to see the match; 99 out of every 100 people are on the side of law and order. The difficulty in India is that common sentiment is now against authority. That is the danger. In this country prison means the mark of degradation but in India, after Mr. Gandhi had been in gaol, prison means a badge of honour. It is not for us to apportion the blame. The question was asked in the House about the American trouble which arose over 200 years ago:

"The question is, not whether this spirit deserves praise or blame, but what in the name of God are we to do with it?"

We had emphasis laid just now on the main part of this case, the Gibraltar of the case, the responsibility of the centre. All arguments led up to it. To that sheaf every other sheaf made obeisance. It was quite clear that if that was not granted, the Conference would end in failure, and it was clear that if that was not secured nothing else would have have been accepted. The demand was made without qualification, and the remarkable thing was that it was made by practically every representative of the Conference, even the representative of the Depressed Classes. I expected something other of him, but he surprised me by joining equally with the great Princes in making that demand. The whole position was changed by the declaration of the Princes, and now we are to have, if this scheme is established the final system, with responsibility of the federal executive to the federal legislature. There are those who approve of the federal system. They are with us there, but they resist responsibility at the centre. If they do that, they are ignoring all the facts of the case. I cannot give the House the whole of the quotations, but I can quote, if necessary, one speaker after another. Take His Highness the Maharajah of Bhopal:

"We have made it clear that we can only federate with a self-governing British India, and that if British India is not self-governed any federation will be to our own disadvantage."

There was a somewhat similar speech by the Maharajah of Bikaner. He said:

"The Princes have made it clear that they cannot federate with the present Government of India, and we are not going to make any sacrifices and delegate any of our sovereign powers unless and until we can share them honourably and fully with British India in the Federal Executive and Legislature."

It was on the very last morning of the Conference that His Highness the Maharajah of Patiala made a similar statement. Then came the crisis of the Conference, when the declaration was made which, I think, turned the whole

course of the Conference. I am sorry that no reference has been made yet to it in this Assembly. I had the honour of being associated, along with my colleagues, with the Marquess of Reading. He made a statement upon that day in which he put the Liberal declaration, and that declaration made the difference in the Conference. It was the Great Divide of the Conference. Up to that time all the waters were flowing towards the West, and when that declaration had been made all the waters flowed towards the East. Lord Reading said:

"My Lord Chancellor, the time has now come when, speaking on behalf of the Liberal party delegation, I should inform the members of this Committee where we stand as a Liberal party . . . . We, the Liberal party delegation, approach the subject of responsibility of the federal executive to the federal legislature with a genuine desire to give effect, as far as we legitimately can, to the views of the British Indian Delegation in this direction, provided that adequate safeguards and reservations are introduced which will enable the Government of India to be carried on with reasonable security to all interests, and that the new constitution will be fairly workable."

I know very well what was said on the following morning by one who represents the most extreme section of Indian faith. Mr. Jayakar said that if the speech which was made Lord Reading could have been heard throughout the towns and villages of India, with the tone in which the speech was made, the suspicion and the difficulties of India would have disappeared like mist before the sun. We have this responsibility at the centre. We have got the safeguards which I regard as the scaffolding for the building. I was glad to hear what the Prime Minister had to say about the safeguards, which was that the safeguards are not intended because we in this country are reluctant to release some of the power which we have possessed for so many years; they are meant not so much for our advantage as for the good of India. That was recognised by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. He said:

"When you come to examine these safeguards they are really intended in the interests of responsible government which we are establishing at the centre, and not to strengthen the hands of English control over us."

I know that there are risks. We have heard something of that to-day. Of course there are risks, but upon whom do the risks mainly fall? Suppose India has to go into disturbance and chaos, that would be a great loss to us, but the risk would be measurable. For India it would be final and complete and irretrievable. One Prince after another, and one representative after another rose in his place—I have quotations here—virtually saying, "We will take this risk. The risk is ours. After all it means to you the loss of capital. It means to you the loss of many interests, but to us it means everything. We ask that the risk should be taken."

We had the trouble about minorities, an intractable problem, but we here were discussing another kindred problem last Wednesday night. We cannot after that Debate be hard and harsh in our judgment of other peoples. The Prime Minister has had the same experience as so many others have had in facing this problem. When the All-Parties Conference was held in Delhi in 1928, it was thought that they had solved the problem. Sir Hari Gour Singh says in his memorandum:

"It has brought the elephant of Hindu majority and the tiger of the Moslem minority to the brink of the common pool."

They had their disappointment then, as the Prime Minister had his disappointment here. He was very near a settlement then. I can only hope that those approachments which were so closely made may be more closely effected before many months are past. I will tell the House what is my hope in this direction. My hope, first of all, is in the youth of India who are impatient at this communal quarrel, and my hope is, next, in the women of India. The Prime Minister will bear me out, that the most remarkable thing in that Conference was the fact that we had the two women, representative of the women of India, who both made their appeal for the settlement of the communal difficulty. They said that as far as the women's movement in India was concerned, they would refuse to allow the communal difficulty to enter into their activities. If I had time, I could speak about the claims made on behalf of the women on the Franchise Committee and upon the Minorities Committee. Their claim was eloquently maintained, and as the right hon. Gentleman (Sir J. Simon) said in the Report, the key of progress is in the hands of the women. I hope that what-

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ever new Committte is set up, the women's claims will have primary consideration.

I should now like to make a reference or two to the Nationalist demand, this demand for self-government. I believe it is mainly a claim for status. It is not merely a claim for material ends. Very little time was taken over the struggle for a few lacs or a few crores here or there. It is mainly a question of status throughout the Empire. I have read those remarkable volumes of the "Moral and Material Progress in India," published during the past 10 years. We have them on our shelves, and if hon. Members read them they will see how a few years ago India was swept with anger because of the treatment of her nationals in other parts of the Empire. The Imperial Conference of 1923 did something to restore confidence. The Indian believes that his country should not be subordinate. He believes that his people are the equal of any race in the world, and that he is not one of the subject people, and a conquered race. He has a civilisation older than ours. He has a high lineage. He comes from a proud descent. He believes that he should have a right to hold his head high among the nations of the world. He compares his civilisation with ours, not always to our advantage. He sees in our western civilisation much that he does not want in India—materialism, alcoholism, industrialism, the sick hurry and aggression and the desperate scramble of an acquisitive society. He believes that in our western civilisation there are some elements that he would adopt, but he wants to adopt them as a free man, and not because he is obliged to do so as a member of a subject race. I should like to refer to what was said a few days ago here in London by one of the greatest Indian leaders—Rabindranath Tagore. He said:

"We have often tried to repudiate the West, but deep in our being there is a real reverence and admiration for the great things which truly represent Western humanity and we have within us from the beginning of our lives that cultural meeting—of the east and west."

It is not a claim merely for status, but also for liberty. Nothing more surprised me than the talk of Lord Rothermere and the talk of other men as if it were a surprising thing that this claim for self-government should be made. What else did we expect?

"Do men gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles?"

We have taught them about our history. Our history has given the story of the struggle for representative institutions. In 1886 Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, one of the greatest national leaders in India, said:

"The Englishman cannot, if he stands by his history, deny India these representative institutions."

The Indian has learned from our literature something of our love of liberty. Liberty is something which is recognised all over the world. It is not a matter of race. Freedom knows no frontiers. Amongst the greatest lines in the English language, as some will think, are the concluding words of a sonnet written by William Wordsworth:

"Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee—air, earth and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee. Thou hast great allies.
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love and man's unconquerable mind."

That sonnet was written about a man whose face was black in colour. He was a slave and he died in prison. We have given to the Indian people this love of liberty, and when we are told that Gandhism and all that it stands for is to be crushed, I would like the right hon. Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) to tell us what we are to do with English literature. What books are we to shut out? We should have to shut out his own book on "Liberalism and the Social Problem," which I read years ago. I bought that book when I was a youth, and I marked almost every word of it. When he seeks to decide what literature he will shut out, he will have the same difficulty that the late Marquess Curzon once experienced. In the book on his life it is stated that when he was confronted with the arrangements for the Delhi Durbar, he said:

"We cannot possibly have the hymn 'Onward Christian Soldiers' because there is a verse in it which runs:

'Crowns and Thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane.'

That would not be particularly appropriate."

When the right hon. Gentleman has crushed Gandhism and all that it stands for, he will have to exclude the literature of liberty, and when he has excluded all the literature of liberty he will have practically excluded all the great literature that we have got. All the really great sonnets of Wordsworth were written when he was a Liberal. His later sonnets, written when he was a Tory, were in defence of capital punishment. In excluding the literature of liberty, the right hon. Gentleman would need to exclude the New Testament. The New Testament contains more dynamite than all the rest of the world's literature put together.

We do not look upon this question of self-government for India as something that we ought to begrudge and deplore We say that it indicates the day for which this country has looked for many years. In the year 1833, speaking in this House, Macaulay said—I quote from memory—

"The day may come when they will outgrow our system and demand European institutions. If ever that day comes it will be the greatest day in English history."

One of the most gallant British soldiers who ever fought in India and one of the wisest of her administrators said:

"It is an impossible thing to contemplate that God meant that 30,000,000 of people from an alien country should for ever control the destinies of 200,000,000."

That was a man who has a tablet in his honour in Westminster Abbey, who has a window to his memory in King's College, and a town bearing his honoured name in the district in India where he served.

I should like to deal with one further subject which, in my opinion, is of commanding importance. I refer to the question of the Depressed Classes, who are known by the unfortunate name of the Untouchables. I have been at some pains to follow their case, and although I will not ask the House to go into the records that have been made in regard to them, I would in particular refer to the report of the Depressed Classes Committee set up by the Bombay Presidency, because it is recent, it is authoritative, and it is an inquiry made by the Indian people themselves. If hon. Members will read that report they will realise to some extent the exceedingly bitter sufferings of these people. With all the desire that I have to support the proposals for self-government, I say that if we take no precautions and if we establish no safeguards for the protection of these defenceless people, it may be that their blood will cry out against us. I know what Mr. Gandhi has said about them, and I know what Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru has said about them. There are those who say that the only protection that these people have is the British Raj, but one remembers what was said by the spokesman for the Depressed Classes at the Conference:

"You British have come to our country. We were Untouchables before you came. You have been here all these generations, and we are Untouchables still."

It may be that very often the Indian Government find it difficult to deal with these things, as being reluctant to interfere with caste and ancient customs, but we must not forget the part that these people have played. In former days in the Army in India, while we had the commanding genius of our generals, their troops were the Untouchables. The soldiers who fought under Wellesley and Hastings were largely men of the Depressed Classes. To-day, the Depressed Classes are not recruited into our Army. Nevertheless, we have placed upon us the great responsibility of dealing with these people. If hon. Members will read the report they will see that the children of these classes have often been kept out of the public school. They will read of wells that cannot be touched by the Depressed Classes, of wells going dry and the mothers unable to get any water to slake the thirst of their children, because they belong to the Untouchables. Records are given of children who were kept out of school and only given instruction just as one would throw bones to a dog. They cannot go into the common school because they are Untouchable children.

If I had any advice to give to the future governors of India it would be this: "Let your main concern be for these people. There are 40 to 60 million of them. They may be defenceless now, but one day they will be strong." As there is justice upon this earth there are neither dams nor dykes that can keep back for ever the accumulated wrongs and sufferings of these people. The real test of the progress of India 20 years hence will be, "What have you done for these

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people? To what extent have you raised their status"? I am a believer in self-government for India, because I believe that upon those lines there is the best hope for these people, who are fellow-subjects of ours. Dominion status means nothing unless we meet the just claims of these people. India cannot expect to go into the Promised Land and to leave 40 to 60 million of her people behind in the Wilderness.

Our task is great. To bring India within the commonwealth is the biggest thing that we have ever yet attempted. There is nothing like it in the history of the world. The great problem of the future will be the problem of the clash of race and colour. I would advise hon. Members to read the remarkable book which was written recently by Mr. Edward Thompson, an authority upon Indian affairs, who says:

"If we can succeed in this business, it would strike the greatest blow at race and colour prejudice that has been struck since the time of Christ."

The peace of the world very largely depends upon the solution of this problem. We have had a long association with India. When we come through Westminster Hall, we see the place where Warren Hastings for many years stood upon his trial. When we come to St. Stephens Hall, we see the picture of the Englishman who in the time of Elizabeth visited the court of Akbar desiring permission to trade. We also see there the statues of Burke, Fox, Bright and others. We are indeed encompassed about by a great cloud of witnesses. There has been put upon us a responsibility greater than we have had before. If we have given to India, as I believe we have, the great blessings of peace, a common language the consciousness of unity and the rule of justice, would it not be the most lamentable thing if that long and honourable association should now be broken in the midst of anger, hatred and ill-will? I believe that along the lines of the proposed settlement that association can be maintained, and I believe that the problems cannot be solved except upon the lines of friendship. In conclusion, let me quote the words that were used in Parliament by the great Protector:

"God has brought us where we are in order that we may consider the work we have to do in the world as well as at home."

We never had any greater work to do in the world than upon the lines of these proposals which have been placed before us by the right hon. Gentleman to-day.

Major GRAHAM POLE: I should like to congratulate the hon. Member who has just sat down, also the two right hon. Gentlemen who preceded him and the members of the Conference that has done such wonderful work—the greatest work that this country has ever set its hand to. I should also like to congratulate the Viceroy and the Government of India on the great courage they have shown, and the great foresight and wisdom they have displayed in releasing Mr. Gandhi. As the hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Foot) has said, there is a good deal of opposition in some of the Press about the work that has been done, but that opposition is not representative of the British mind. Although it is not representative of the British mind, it is cabled out to India, and it had more to do with the difficulties at the beginning of the Round Table Conference than anything else. Speeches like those made by the right hon. Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill), articles of the kind which appear in the Rothermere Press and speeches like the one that was delivered last week, in Ulster, by Lord Brentford, are most mischievous. The speech of Lord Brentford in Ulster in which he stated that we went to the Dominions to colonise them, but that we went to India because we conquered India, and that was the reason why we must retain it, was most mischievous.

The great value of what has been done at the Conference is that it has been done not by the majority test of voting, but because it has been brought about as a measure of the common sense and good will of the Conference. As the right hon. Member for Chelsea (Sir S. Hoare) said, there are many gaps yet to be filled, but the great framework is there and those gaps can be filled in India with good will on both sides. One thing that is really vital and essential is that by the conclusions of the Conference we are making some attempt at the redemption of pledges that we have given over and over again, and which many people in India thought we had no intention ever to

redeem. This will open a new chapter in the history of India. It has written a momentous chapter in the history of this country and of the Empire. It means the handing over by one people of the destinies of a great people to a great people, who have been held subject for many centuries. No praise can be too great for the wonderful work,

6.0 p.m. the good management and the tact shown by the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for India and the Lord Chancellor. There is not a member of the Round Table Conference who is not full of praise for their work. As one Indian gentleman said to me about Lord Sankey, "I am henceforth a pro-Sankey man, whatever happens." I should like also to pay a tribute to one who has been more or less in the background, the Secretary of State for India, who has smoothed things over, oiled the wheels, so to speak, and made possible the success of the Conference.

This is a great gift, if one might call it a gift, although it is handing back to India something to which India is entitled, on behalf of this country and her great Empire, quite willing and voluntarily to India. Let us hope that India will accept it in the spirit in which it is so freely given. The future of India now lies in the hands of Indians themselves. They can make India just what they like. The delegates who came here did so against the strongest public opinion in India. Indians then did not believe in our good faith. How much greater is the achievement that has come about in the agreement which has been reached. It will restore to Indians what is more precious than life itself—izzat, their honour, their self-respect, their status as free citizens in their own country and in the Empire. India as a result will take her place as a free partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

If we wish to see how far we have travelled upon the road to self-government for India, we have only to compare the Declaration made in this House in 1917 by Mr. Montagu, who was then Secretary of State for India, and which was embodied in the Government of India Act, 1919, with the position to-day. The Government of India Act in its preamble spoke of the

"gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the British Empire."

It went on to say

"this policy can only be achieved by successive stages . . . . and the time and manner of each advance can be determined only by Parliament, upon whom responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples."

Compare that with the Prime Minister's statement in summing up the Round Table Conference.

"Finally, I hope and I trust and I pray that by our labours together India will possess the only thing which she now lacks to give her the status of a Dominion among the British Commonwealth of Nations—what she now lacks for that, the responsibilities and the cares, the burdens and the difficulties, but the pride and the honour of responsibile self-government."

The Prime Minister definitely placed the Indian constitution on a permanent basis. Responsibility in future is to be placed on Indians, both at the Centre and in the Provinces. The safeguards are a matter of common agreement and concern, and their disappearance in time will result as a matter of negotiation amongst equals. Compare that with the Declaration of 1917, in which Parliament was to be the sole judge, and one can see how far we have travelled. The test then was to be India's fitness. That has entirely gone. In the Prime Minister's statement there is no question about India's fitness; we admit that. I should like to quote some words of Immanuel Kant, which, I think, are quite apposite:

"If we were not designed to exert our powers until we were assured of our ability to attain our object, those powers would remain unused. It is oly by trying that we learn what our powers are."

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, who was referred to by the hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Foot) wrote a letter in the "New York Times" in which he said

"It is the opportunity for self-government itself which gives for self-government, not foreign subjection."

I should also like to thank the Noble Lord, Lord Lothian, for his excellent statement that:

"The only cure for irresponsibility is responsibility."

An India free and friendly will be a great bulwark for Britain. We went to India nearly two centuries ago for trade; and that is what we want badly to-day. The agreement to-day with

[Major Pole.]

India is the best promise for trade and benefit both to India and to Britain. Something has been said about safeguards. These are necessary in the interests of the Indians themselves, and as I said in the House last May, if we brought the Indians here to a Round Table Conference they themselves would insist on safeguards. They are absolutely necessary in the interests of Indians themselves, and Indians alone will be able to say when they will be unnecessary. It is in the interests of a united India to make them unnecessary as soon as possible. The Prime Minister in referring to safeguards pointed out that it would be the primary concern of His Majesty's Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of Indians throughout the new constitution to full responsibility for full Government. Sir Taj Bahadur Sapru, that far seeing statesman, said in connection with safeguards:

"It may be that there are certain safeguards. Frankly I am not alarmed by those safeguards; and indeed . . . . those safeguards are really intended in the interests of the responsible government that we are establishing at the centre and not to strengthen the hands of English control over us."

India has been a great country, not merely for centuries but for thousands of years. Indian culture has influenced and is influencing the world to-day. India in the past has had great Empires and the names of Asoka and Akbar will be remembered for all times as great emperors. India has survived while other countries and empires which have grown up since have perished. The future of India will, I believe, be equal to her past. She has shown this country that she has statesmen and orators, men and women, fit to take their place amongst the greatest in the Empire. I wonder whether India will appreciate her orators and statesmen as we have appreciated them; will India appreciate what they have done for her? It was the Begum Shah Nawaz who said:

"We came with misgiving. We are going back with a wealth of confidence and trust."

It has been a great achievement, and for that we must congratulate the members who took part in the Round Table Conference. Some of us have been working for such a result as this for many years. Our prayer now must be for greater understanding, greater co-operation, whole-hearted recognition on the part of each of the qualities and virtues of the other partner, and a firm determination to assist the other partner to the greatest measure in our power.

Sir JOHN SIMON: We have had a most interesting Debate, and I should like to join with the hon. and gallant Member for South Derbyshire (Major Pole) in saying with what admiration I listened to the eloquence and literary flavour of the speech of the hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Foot). In surveying the work of the Conference, those of us who were not members of it must necessarily do our best to study the book which has been issued during the week-end. I am not making a single word of criticism, but for my own part I should have been glad if we had had a little longer time before the Debate, although I understand it was on the suggestion of the Opposition that the Prime Minister put down the Debate for to-day. It is difficult for one to grasp between Saturday and Monday what there is in this series of reports, and we are dealing with matters of such enormous importance and questions of such unimaginable complexity that I should have been glad if the Debate had taken place after a somewhat longer interval.

Using the time as best I could, I have tried to form my own conclusions, which I venture respectfully to offer to the House, on the actual achievements of the Conference. It seems to me that it has accomplished two very great things. In the first place, it has secured what has never been secured before in the history of British connection with India; the Indian Princes of the great native States of India have been brought into actual discussion not only with British statesmen but with their compatriots in British India on constitutional questions. Anyone who has had the experience of my colleagues and myself on the India Commission, which for three years devoted itself to studying every aspect of the Indian problem, will know that that is a most tremendous achievement, and if the Conference has accomplished nothing else, the Prime Minister is entitled to the warmest congratulations of the House.

and I respectfully offer him my own, because he has succeeded in bringing about that Conference.

Let the House observe the full extent of that achievement. An effort was made after the Montagu Report to get some organisation set up which the Indian Princes might use for the purpose of presenting their joint views and consider problems which specially affected their great possessions. It was called The Council of Princes, and was established almost immediately after the Montagu scheme came into force. Until quite recently the Council of Princes has not really included in its deliberations all the great Indian States. For instance, there are two that have not, as a rule, taken any part. There is the great State of Hyderabad. When one speaks of the State of Hyderabad one realises that that State alone is nearly as big as Great Britain. And again there is the very fine and well managed State in the south of India, the State of Mysore, which in its turn is larger than the Irish Free State. The accomplishment which the Government have brought about by calling together this Conference is one which has included the bringing to the Conference table of representatives and spokesmen—I am sure the Prime Minister will agree with me in saying that they are extremely competent representatives —both of Hyderabad and Mysore.

Therefore, it is literally the fact that this Conference has brought together a more complete presentation of the views of the Indian States than, I think, has ever been secured in the course of the work of the Council of the Princes. But it may not be supposed—I do not think anyone would suppose—that I am not saying what has from the beginning been at the back of my mind about this. May I be permitted to say that it is with great satisfaction that the members of the Statutory Commission have seen this result, because after all it was the proposal of our own Statutory Commission which first suggested that the Indian Princes should be asked to the Conference? We had two long and elaborate surveys on the ground in India. My colleagues and I had been working for a matter of two years. We were considering very anxiously and carefully what recommendations we could make; and we came to the conclusion—I am very glad to find that it is now generally accepted—that it is quite impossible to visualise a satisfactory constitution for India in future unless we bring the Indian Princes within the circle. Let me read a few words which I wrote to the Prime Minister on behalf of my colleagues. On 16th October, 1929, I wrote this:

"As our investigation has proceeded we have become more and more impressed, in considering the direction which the future constitutional development of India is likely to take, with the importance of bearing in mind the relations which may develop between British India and the Indian States. Whatever may be the scheme which Parliament will ultimately approve for the future constitution and government of British India, it is essential that the methods by which the future relationship between the two constituent parts may be adjusted, should be fully examined. Our own recommendations, if we were to exclude from our purview the wider problem we have indicated, would we feel, be unduly restricted, and we therefore wish, before going further, to ascertain whether we should have the approval of His Majesty's Government in giving this possibly extended interpretation to our own terms of reference.

"It seems to us that what would be required would be the setting up of some sort of Conference after the reports of the Statutory Commission and the Indian Central Committee have been made, considered and published, and their work has been completed, and that in this conference His Majesty's Government would meet both representatives of British India and representatives of the States for the purpose of seeking the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals which it would be the duty of His Majesty's Government to submit to Parliament."

In a matter of this gravity I do not want to occupy one moment more than is necessary, for where credit lies for this or that does not matter in the least. But I mention it because I would like it to be understood, as I have one or two criticisms to offer, that I do regard it as a most satisfactory result and a very great achievement that the Government have succeeded in getting this representation of the Princes at the Conference, and that the Princes should have taken the remarkable part which they have taken. Let the House make no mistake. The Princes here have not in any way bound the individual Princes throughout India. We should be very wrong if we carried the matter further than we can. But they have done a thing which is a very striking indeed, because they have come

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forward and have made it perfectly plain, so far as they or their representatives are here, that they adopt and endorse the ideal of an all-India Federation, not as a distant ideal but as the working basis of a future constitution. For that matter I most infinitely rejoice.

Then there is the second thing of great importance which has been achieved. The Conference, as I see it, has begun the work—I advisedly say "begun"—of bringing British politicians on the one hand and some Indian politicians on the other face to face with the stupendous difficulties of the Indian problem. It is inevitable in a Debate of this sort, when we are all taking comfort from what has been accomplished, that we should pass over these difficulties lightly. But they are absolutely stupendous. There is nothing in the least like them in the previous history of the British Empire or indeed of the world, as far as I know. It is very important that all of us who desire to do what we can to contribute the best of our minds as well as of our sympathies to this question, should realise the nature of the stupendous difficulties. I regard it as a very great advantage that there has been this meeting face to face of British statesmen on the one hand and Indian politicians on the other, who have at last begun to consider and define what these difficulties, or some of them, are. The Prime Minister said and said truly that a general survey had been made. I think that in one or two particulars he was a little sanguine to say that the lines of advance had been laid down. But these two achievements are very great achievements indeed.

Speaking to the House, as I desire, without any rhetoric of exaggeration, I would like to explain why I regard them as so enormously important. They are enormously important because they tend to get rid and help to get rid of what are the two main obstacles to a peaceful solution of this problem. The first obstacle, as the Prime Minister said just now, is the obstacle of suspicion and misunderstanding. I spent some years of my life, very single-mindedly, in trying to shew that my colleagues and I desired nothing but to serve the best interests of India, so far as we understood them. The extent to which it was difficult to persuade people of that was a thing which had to be experienced to be believed, but at the same time the extent to which kindness and generosity is shown as soon as your real object becomes manifest, is nowhere seen so abundantly as in India. The achievement of the Conference which I so gladly recognise is that it has got rid of that obstacle to a very remarkable degree.

The Prime Minister spoke of candour and good will. Good will, I know, there is. I think it is very necessary in this matter also that there should be perfect candour on both sides. The other great obstacle, the obstacle which my colleagues on the Commission felt all the time, was this: There is and must be a great want of familiarity on the British side with the Indian outlook and conditions, and on the Indian side there is also an obstacle of this sort—the tendency, due, I suppose, very largely to cultural background, the tendency of the Indian mind to dwell on ideals—political ideals in this case—rather to the exclusion of the practical problems which the solution of those ideals presents. I am going to exercise a candour which the Prime Minister rightly said was one of the qualities to be borne in mind. The contrast is one which I do not think either in India or this country has always been quite sufficiently observed.

Let me first put it on the British side. The British constitution has not developed by passing from the general to the particular. If you take our own constitution, the instance of the land in which we live and its main rules, you find that each constitutional landmark in Britain has really been reached as a definite remedy worked out by a practical people for an immediate evil. That is the real truth about our own constitution. We talk in an airy way about Hampden and ship money as though it represented some enormous principle. As a matter of fact it was the objection of a very obstinate Buckinghamshire squire to being called upon to pay a particular tax which he thought he might successfully prove he was not bound to pay. It is true that the whole way from Magna Charta to the Parliament Act, in every single stage and every single case, the British constitution has really developed by making a new brick, placing a new step, relieving some

definite concrete obstacle, and the result is that it has gradually been built up until it is a thing we all swear by. One reason why foreigners never understand the British constitution is that that is the way in which it has been done.

It is what you call this practical character of the British people which is in such complete and absolute contrast with the way in which the thoughtful and educated mind of India looks at similar problems. In our case it has always been the existence of concrete changes, no doubt for a practical end and not for the purpose of illustrating or achieving an abstract conception. You may put it in this way: That British institutions have ultimately provided us with a constitutional theory, but the constitutional theory is the result and not the preliminary to the progress that we have made. Contrast that with what I conceive to be the Indian point of view. I am not instituting any injurious comparison. It may very well be that the Indian point of view is the better of the two, but the point is that it is absolutely and fundamentally different. I doubt very much whether we have made sufficient allowance for the fact that the Indian point of view is quite different.

The influence of an abstract ideal upon the Indian mind, and especially the Hindu mind, is something immense. Contemplation in connection with religion—you can see it wherever you travel in India, and it illustrates, as I conceive the thing, an intelligence very different from ours, perhaps more refined than ours; but it is a point of view in which the abstract idea itself, there in the heavens, represents about nine-tenths of what the Indian seeks. I do not say that that conception never occurs in the West. I seem to recall a passage in Plato's "Republic"—always a very mysterious passage to me—where a distinction is drawn between the bed you lie on, and the bed that is in Heaven. But, be that as it may, I am convinced that, if you want to approach this problem correctly, you have to understand the different way in which the Indian mind looks at these political questions, from the way in which the practical Englishman attempts to do so. The satisfaction which the Indian derives from contemplating a general conception is something difficult for us to realise, and I think it has very little to do with what we here would call the practical affairs of life. I make this bold hazard, and it may be that hon. Gentlemen who know India will confirm it. I think it would be true to say of a great deal of the philosophic outlook of Indian politicians that they would prefer a constitution which conformed to their political ideal, though it worked very badly, to a constitution which fell short of that ideal, though it worked very much better.

I am not complaining of it. I am pointing out the consequences. It is this contrast between the Indian way of looking at things, and the British way of looking at things, which constitutes, I think, very much of the difficulty in these discussions, and I am very glad that there has been this opportunity of meeting face to face with Indian statesmen and at least contemplating what some of these problems are. But, while that is so, I must say candidly to the House that I should not think it possible for Parliament's duty to be discharged unless it asks, about any scheme which is brought forward for the future government of India, "Will this scheme work?" We have our duty to do in the matter, and I am bound to say that, for my part, I do not see how we can possibly exclude that question from being at the very front of our considerations. It would be quite impossible to treat declarations of abstract principle as providing even the road to a constitutional solution, without knowing, at any rate roughly, and on the main points how the difficulties are to be met.

If I may speak to the House with complete frankness, as I wish to do, that is where at present I feel some difficulty. It was not to be supposed that the Round Table Conference, sitting most industriously for 10 weeks, could possibly reach agreed conclusions on every point. It would be most unreasonable to think anything of the kind. As has been insisted by the Prime Minister and others, it was not engaged in framing a constitution. That is quite right, but I do wish that it had been possible to carry one or two matters a little further. Let me give the House some examples of the enormously important questions which, as yet, remain perfectly open and unsolved. The House knows that I am not doing this with the smallest desire to deprecate the good work that has been done, but we cannot help India and we

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cannot help the House of Commons unless we speak with firmness and frankness on the matter.

Take, first of all, the subject of bringing the Indian Princes within the all-India Federation. I understand that to be an absolute condition upon which some, at least, of my friends, that is my Liberal friends, have taken their stand. It is going to be a tremendous business to work out. You first have to consider in what sort of proportion will you create your central body, with its legislature or executive. In what sort of proportion are the Indian States going to stand to the rest of British India? There has been some discussion upon that question, but it is not yet agreed or worked out. Of course, it is a most difficult thing to decide. The cutting off of Burma—and I register in passing great satisfaction in finding that that principle is accepted—happens to be the cutting off of one of the nine provinces of India which contains a very small amount of Indian State territory, and the result is that you are left with the rest of India, with a larger proportion of Indian State territory than you would have had if Burma came in to alter the balance.

Are you going in your constitution to provide, first, in the executive that the Indian States are to have representatives? I have not discovered in this document, as far as I have been able to follow it, that that question has been carefully or closely discussed as yet. Are you going to secure that the relation between the Indian States and British India is going to be in accordance with population, or in accordance with area, or how? These are, of course, most elementary things in endeavouring to work out a future federation. They were the very beginning, for example, of the discussions which took place at the time of the Quebec Resolution in Canada. They were the very beginning of the negotiations in Australia and in South Africa. While I am making no sort of complaint, it is right to observe that, as yet, that question is quite unsolved.

Take the second class of question—very difficult indeed—which in the old Home Rule days in this country used to be called the "in-and-out" question. Are the Indian States in this new constitution going to play their part, along with the representatives of British India, in all matters that arise at the centre; or is there to be a leaving of them out or a bringing of them in according to the particular topic under discussion? That question was so important that it destroyed one Government in this country. Mr. Gladstone's first Home Rule Government was very largely destroyed because of that difficult question and, of course, it is a most fundamental question and one which has to be most carefully considered. I do not think that at present any question of that sort has been settled, and, as was pointed out by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Chelsea (Sir S. Hoare), the enormous question of paramountcy is another, and the exercise of the authority of the King-Emperor in relation to the Indian Princes, which is most certainly in the minds of the Indian Princes, has not, to the best of my belief, ever been referred to in the Conference at all.

I only point this out to show how on that side there is a tremendous amount of work still to be done. If the House will allow me, I will give a second example. The Prime Minister made some interesting observations about what is called the community question. He said it was fascinating. I agree with him. I have been fascinated by it for a long time, and there are of course very elaborate chapters in both volumes of the Statutory Commission's report providing figures and opinions and schemes of a great many kinds in connection with it. The Prime Minister told us of various ways in which it might be dealt with, but I am not sure whether it was realised in the House that one of the ways which he mentioned is in practice in India to-day. Both in Madras and Bombay there are instances in which seats are reserved for particular sets of people, particular castes, or people in a particular caste, in order that it may be sure, whatever the vote is, that a particular kind of person shall have adequate representation. I agree that it is one of the most fascinating and also one of the most complicated questions imaginable, and it lies at the very root of any future constitution for India.

I naturally looked during the week-end to see how far I could get help from the report of the Conference, and I ask the attention of the House to the four para-

graphs which deal with this matter on pages 48 and 49 of the Blue Book. I beg of hon. Members to note that I am calling attention to these matters solely for the purpose of showing how much work there is to be done. The first of these four paragraphs is as follows:

"The discussion in the sub-Committee has enabled the Delegates to face the difficulties involved in the schemes put up, and though no general agreement has been reached, its necessity has become more apparent than ever."

I do not think that would be a very good instruction to a draftsman. The second paragraph states:

"It has also been made clear that the British Government cannot"—

I quite agree with that—

"with any chance of agreement, impose upon the communities an electoral principle which, in some feature or other would be met by their opposition."

That is right. In fact, I may say that that is a view which we had expressed and argued very elaborately in our report.

"It was, therefore, claimed that, failing an agreement, separate electorates, with all their drawbacks and difficulties, would have to be retained as the basis of the electoral arrangements under the new constitution. From this the question of proportions would arise."

I should have thought it would. At the inquiry over which I presided, for weeks and months we had this question of proportions in nearly every province of India. The question will certainly arise.

"Under these circumstances, the claims of the Depressed Classes will have to be considered adequately. The sub-Committee therefore recommend"—

this is the recommendation on this very important subject—

"that the Conference should register an opinion that it was desirable that an agreement upon the claims made to it should be reached, and that the negotiations should be continued between the representatives concerned with a request that the result of their efforts should be reported to those engaged in the next stage of these negotiations."

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

There is not the smallest ground for reproaching anybody with the fact that more has not been accomplished, but it is very necessary to appreciate that, in fact, as regards this question which lies at the very root of the new constitution, nothing has yet been accomplished at all. Then take the next thing. One of the greatest difficulties, and I ask the House to observe this, in providing for separate communal representation and a thing which has caused many who sympathise with Indian advance, to resist it to the last possible moment, is this. If once you concede that a particular community in India is entitled to separate representation in the legislature, what are you going to do when it comes to composing the executive? Are you going to give them a guarantee there too or are you not? It is very well-known to me and my colleagues on the Commission and no doubt to others, that as a matter of fact that question interests and excites minority communities just as much as separate representation itself. Again I merely make the point for the purpose of showing how much work there is to be done. As far as I know, it is dealt with in these words:

"The difficulty of working a jointly responsible executive under such a scheme as this, was pointed out."

I believe that that is the extent to which this particular matter has been——

Mr. OLIVER STANLEY: There is another paragraph.

Sir J. SIMON: Yes, I am very much obliged to the hon. Member for pointing it out:

"There was general agreement with the recommendation of sub-Committee No. II that the representation on the Provincial Executives of important minority communities was a matter of the greatest practical importance for the successful working of the new constitution and it was also agreed that on the same grounds, Mohammedans should be represented on the Federal Executive."

But observe that the real importance of the subject, which has to be talked out and discussed with very great care on both sides is this—are you going to put that into the constitution, because if you are, there is nothing like it in the present one. Then the difficulty of working out a system of responsible government with a responsible executive, chosen because it represents the more general view in the legislature, is manifestly very great.

Mr. STANLEY: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman read paragraph (*c*) on page 42?

Sir J. SIMON: Certainly:

"(c) *Group or communal representation in the Cabinet.*—The sub-committee considers it a matter of practical importance to the success of the new constitutions that important minority interests should be adequately recognised in the formation of the provincial executives. An obligation to endeavour to secure such representation should be expressed in the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor."

If anybody supposes—especially if the Secretary of State for India, whom I thought I heard cheering, supposes—that I am trying to minimise the results arrived at, he is wrong, but I am pointing out that these are really quite fundamental things, and I do not myself see—I am bound to tell the House quite candidly how I feel—how, until on some of these main, fundamental heads more progress has been made, it is possible to be quite so confident as some people are, and no doubt as we should all like to be, as to how the thing is actually going to work out. If that is so, I desire to put to the House, quite briefly, my own conclusions, for what they may be worth, and I will put them under four simple heads. I have endeavoured to indicate my own view, which I hold most sincerely, of the achievements which the Conference has made. I most certainly do take the view that as yet we have travelled a very small part of the way which has got to be travelled before a constitution can be framed, and I very much hope that the Debate to-day is going to assist us in travelling further.

In the first place, I say that, like everybody else in the House, I rejoice at the success of the Conference in securing the adhesion of the Princes to the general idea of an all-India Federation. I say, secondly, that it was inevitable that in the time available the Conference has not been able to produce a practical solution on so many very difficult and very cardinal matters. I say, in the third place, that, while recognising how much satisfaction a formula of responsibility with safeguards can give I would like to point out how, to the Indian mind, it is one of those abstract conceptions on which he likes to dwell—still I cannot regard unformulated safeguards on vital matters as mere questions of detail. It seems to me that the formulation on these main matters of how these safeguards are to work into the scheme is really of the essence of the scheme itself. They are fundamental, I think, to the content of any future Indian constitution, and I do not believe that even the broad outlines of an Indian consitution can be regarded as satisfactorily laid down until these main matters approach nearer to settlement. Lastly, I would say this: I would beg that the good work of the Conference may be recognised for what it is, as the beginning and not at all the end of the matter, and I would beg that Parliament should now undertake its own duty and should contribute, with patience and good will, to the practical work of recasting the constitution and developing the responsibilities of India.

I have had in my mind ever since the House appointed me to be Chairman of the Commission—and I know my colleagues have it in their minds—this reflection: We have worked together from the beginning to the end, I may say, without differences, and I must be allowed to take this opportunity, as there has never been any Debate in this House, of course, on the report of the Statutory Commission, of expressing my deep obligations to my colleagues on all benches of the House who served with me in that inquiry. We have all had this feeling in our minds, and I believe it to be a reflection well worthy of being raised by those who are anxious and critical of what is being done. The desire in so many Indians' minds to advance towards self-government is, after all, only a reflection of the belief held by the British in the virtues of responsible institutions as they have been worked out by ourselves. That is what it is. It is true, I think, that many Indians may not appreciate the extent of the contrast in conditions. I think many of them have tended to minimise the difficulties to be overcome, but, after all, the growth of this principle of self-government in many Indians' minds, the hope to secure it, the resolve to work for it—that is an achievement which has been brought about by the power of an idea which Britain has spread throughout the word. It is the greatest contribution that Britain has made to the science of government.

It would be a piece of folly and a piece of ignorance to pretend that the coming of Britain to India had not conferred on that distracted continent many things which she seemed utterly to have lost,

but there is a finer achievement even than that, and the finest achievement would be to contribute our own constructive statesmanship, as friends and allies, to assist India to progress towards self-government. I do not believe that we can leave this matter simply to be settled by what is called Indian opinian. There are a hundred communities lying behind that India that we hear, every one of which is entitled to the consideration of Parliament, and I do from my heart believe that it is only by standing firmly by the declarations that the Prime Minister quoted, every one of which he will find quoted in the report, that we can ever hope to make the contribution which we ought to make and which we must make towards Indian progress and Indian peace.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I desire, if the House will permit me, to approach this question from a different angle from that which is now fashionable and from a somewhat different angle even from that which guided the right hon. and learned Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon), in his impressive and instructive speech. But, first, I should like to pay a tribute to the Conservative delegates upon the Round Table Conference for the skill, patience, and tact with which they extricated themselves from an exceedingly difficult situation, and for the manner in which they have preserved our party free to use its judgment upon future events. Although my language would not be theirs, nor theirs mine, I thank them for the care they have taken to safeguard our liberty of action. I must, of course, first of all make it quite clear that I do not speak for the official Opposition nor for my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition. I speak solely as a Member of Parliament, of some service in this House, who holds views upon this matter which ought not to go unrepresented in this discussion.

I hold that the handling of Indian affairs during the last 18 months has been most unfortunate and has led already to results which will be long lamented. I will make the briefest review which is necessary. Lord Birkenhead, with foresight and with wisdom, antedated by two years the setting up of the Commission laid down in the Act of 1920 for the reviewing of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. The Commission was set up by Act of Parliament, all the three parties co-operated in its setting up, and all three were represented on the Commission. The Commission, after immense labours, journeys, and studies, presented a report which was unanimous, and it presented that report to the Houses of Parliament which had called it into being. What has happened to that report of our Commission? Why has it been rushed altogether—though compliments have been paid to it—out of the sequence of events?

One would have thought that that report would have been debated by Parliament, probably on a series of Resolutions, that we should have heard, not for the first time, as we have done to-day, but repeatedly, the advice of the distinguished men of all parties who contributed to that report, and that the Government would then, guided by the Resolutions of the House and by the advice of those whom the House had charged and whom the Act of 1920 indicates should be charged with the duty of advising Parliament, have framed a Bill. It was also contemplated and generally agreed that this Bill, after being presented to Parliament and read a Second time, should be the subject of a Joint Committee of both Houses, to which Indian representatives of every shade of opinion should be invited to have recourse; and, finally, the Bill would have been passed through its stages and presented for the Royal Assent.

Such was the procedure marked out. coolly, calmly, and far in advance, and marked out by general assent. Why is it that we have departed from it? It is, I suppose, because the Viceroy, moved or influenced by His Majesty's Government—I do not know, I cannot tell—determined to make a pronouncement in the winter of 1929, opening up in general, guarded, but still spacious terms the idea of Dominion status. I hold that this pronouncement—I am afraid I must ask the House to permit me to state, with the candour which we have been invited to adopt, my point of view—was uncalled for, that it was an interruption of the procedure prescribed by law, and that it was an intervention between Parliament and their Commission. Everyone had agreed to await the Report of the Commission,

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and it is most regrettable that Parliament and Indian opinion also were not permitted to receive that Report unprejudiced by prior declarations. For this, the accountable responsibility rests with the Government of the day, but as the result see what happened.

The Report was profoundly prejudiced before its publication, and when it was seen that the Commissioners unanimously had deliberately excluded the expression "Dominion status" from their Report, a very painful difference was disclosed between the Viceroy and the Government of India on the one hand and our Statutory Commission on the other. At the same time, there was an enormous leap forward in the demands of the Indian political classes. What had been accepted before was now brushed aside. Moderate men adopted opinions which hitherto had been considered extreme. Outbreaks of disorder and lawlessness occurred in many parts of India, culminating in the Conference of the Congress at Lahore, at which the British flag was insulted with every circumstance of formality and publicity and, I may add, insulted with impunity.

7.0 p. m.

Sometime before, when it had been made a grievance that Indians were not represented upon the Simon Commission - if I may be permitted to use that term - the Commissioners themselves suggested a Conference in London as a preliminary to a Bill and that all sections of Indian opinion should be invited thereto. That Conference has eventually assembled, but under very different conditions to anything foreseen by the Statutory Commission. Not only was the Report with all its thought and study and with all its strong, bold, practical plan of constructive advance, going further than many of us would care to go in some respects, not only was the Report completely shelved, but the right hon. and learned Member and his colleagues, who sit about on various benches, were invidiously excluded from the whole of the Conference proceedings. This was done, as we all know, in the hopes of persuading the representatives of the Indian Congress and other extremists to attend. Our trusted friends and lawful, formal and authoritative advisers were set aside in order to placate those who are the bitterest opponents of British rule in India. Nevertheless, they would not come. The Congress Party refused to attend the Conference even though it was mutilated as I have described to suit their prejudices.

What happened then? The Government of India thereupon collected a number of notables as representative as possible of all the various phases of Indian life but with no delegated authority, so far as the forces with which we have to deal are concerned, no power to conclude an agreement and still less any power to enforce it. These representatives, together with the Indian princes, met in London. This body, thus composed, without any representative authority from the Indian Congress, without advice from the Statutory Commission, without any guidance in the first instance or even without any effective agenda from His Majesty's Government, proceeded rapidly and almost unconsciously to form itself into what I can only call a would-be and wholly unauthorised constituent assembly. Quite true it was not to frame a constitution in every detail, but this document here, which is its work, cannot be considered as anything else but the work of a would-be and unauthorised constituent assembly, and His Majesty's Government, eagerly catching their mood, set to work without more ado to frame a federal constitution for all India, embodying the principle of a responsible Indian Ministry at the summit and centre of Indian affairs, the whole leading up speedily—that is the whole meaning of this Report—to that full Dominion status with all that it entails, including —as one of the members of the Conference, Mr. Sastri, was careful to remind us—as one of its most important features, the right to secede from the British Empire. While all the world wondered, the Sovereign Power, which had created modern India and which was still its sole support and defence, smilingly, blandly and no doubt in most statesmanlike language, engaged in unlimited hypothetical discussion about how to unite all the existing forces of Indian life so as to be able to hand over to them the executive powers of the central Government and the title deeds of British possessions in India. It was even pre-

tended, or at any rate allowed to appear, that Indian disunity was the only or main obstacle to our speedy departure.

Such proceedings, such conclusions were utterly unforeseen only a year ago in almost any quarter of the House. They would have been scouted and condemned by almost all classes of British opinion only a few months ago. The principle of responsible Government, involving all the proved disadvantages of Dyarchy at the centre, is, of course, contrary to the recommendations of the Commission. It is applied in an entirely different method in this Blue Book and carried to a further point than was recommended in the alternative scheme submitted by the Viceroy and Government of India. We have, first of all, an immense body of knowledge represented by the Simon Commission and Report, and, secondly, that great body of reason and authority represented by the Government of India, all set aside after a few weeks, almost a few days, of discussions and orations at the London Conference, until finally we are confronted with the constitution outlined in this Blue Book. In this hysterical landslide of opinion, the Conservative delegates almost alone kept their heads. I must admit that the Prime Minister showed a measure of deep foreboding in some of his utterances, although, of course, thickly veiled by flowery language. It is quite true that the acceptance of these proposals and all their implications of speedy Dominion status and full responsible Government by His Majesty's Government and by Lord Reading, representing the Liberal party, was accompanied by a host of important reservations and is contingent upon many conditions some of which it is unlikely will be fulfilled.

Could there be a worse way of dealing with so grave a problem? Here for weeks all the foundations of British power in India have been laid bare, and every principle has been treated as an open question. The orb of power has been dangled before the gleaming eyes of excitable millions and before the powerful forces of implacable hostility with whom we have, as is well known, to cope in India, while at the same time in the background, treated as if they were matters of machinery, are whole series of formidable reservations and conditions. Thus, on the one hand the claims and expectancy of those in India have been raised to the highest pitch by sweeping concessions on general questions of principle, while on the other the rugged facts, which have emerged in the speech of my right hon. and learned Friend who preceded me, have all been kept in the shade by clouds of ceremonious and benevolent generalities. Meanwhile, the rapid landslide in British opinion and policy at home has been accompanied in India by a steady development of unrest, disorder, disloyalty and assassination. The well-meaning and high-minded Viceroy has had to couple with his kindly speeches and sentiments a succession of repressive measures and of restrictions on civil liberty without precedent in India since the Mutiny, except in some days of the Great War. Scores of thousands of Indians are imprisoned. I am told as many as 60,000—it seems incredible, but it is so—are in prison in connection with political agitation. The world depression which has reached India is accentuated by the prolonged uncertainty, by the growing disaffection, by the widespread feeling that all the things which they have known for generations are about to be thrown into the melting pot, by the feeling that some enormous change is impending and that violent times are ahead. The result has been suffering and misfortune on a very large scale and as a prelude, as I fear, to even greater troubles, because this uncertainty about all the foundations of social and political life is not over. It is going to be prolonged indefinitely. This constitution, this Blue Book is now going to be paraded round India and discussed there. All the promises and concessions will be set at their maximum; all the safeguards narrowly canvassed with a view to demanding their diminution. All this uncertainty and agitation is going to continue not for months, but possibly for years.

I have completed my recital of the catalogue of errors and disasters which have brought us to our present position. Here I must make it perfectly clear that I accept not only the preamble of the Act of 1919, but also Section 41 of that Act. The preamble shows the ultimate goal to which we declare India may aspire, and Section 41 shows precisely the full right, the uncompromising right of Parliament—at this moment as I hold—to advance or to diverge or, if neces-

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sary, to restrict this forward movement in the development of constitutional government. Let us take the two together. I am quite willing fully to accept the implications of them both. Of course, we assign no limits to the future potential development of our Indian fellow subjects. We enlist their co-operation—have we not been doing so continuously—in every branch of Indian administration and of Indian life. It all depends on time and on facts. My submission to the House to-night is that the time for this extension is premature, and that the facts are adverse. In the upshot, let us see what it is that the Indian Nationalists are expecting to receive. I take from the "Times" of two days ago a quotation of a manifesto of the Indian Nationalists members of the Legislative Assembly. This is the conclusion which they have drawn from the proceedings here. They welcome the policy which the Government propose to adopt of giving effect to their views:

"in establishing a new constitution which will advance India to full responsibility for her own government and to give her the equal status of a dominion among the British Commonwealth of Nations . . . . It is also pleasing to note that His Majesty's Government recognise that the reservations which are to be placed upon the full powers of the Legislature are not only to be transitory but are to be so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India through true responsibility for her own government. In particular, we are emphatically of opinion that the reservations in the matter of financial adjustment must not in the least degree hamper the effective control of Indian Ministers over the finances of India . . . . While welcoming the declaration of policy, we trust its realisation will be immediate, which alone can really satisfy."

These are the opinions of the more moderate representatives of the Indian Nationalists. Now that Mr. Gandhi is again at large, no doubt he will contribute a further gloss upon the Government's proposals. Anything which falls short in time or in fact of these expectations will be a cause of fierce reproaches. I remember the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) in November, 1929, warning the House and the Government of the dangers in connection with this Round Table Conference, if they were not allowed to discuss Dominion status after what had been said and so forth, and the dangers of the charges of breaches of faith and of perfidy, and he said that nothing could be worse than that in our relations with India. If that were the danger, then, how much more is it a danger now, when you contrast this kind of expectation as regarded by the Indian Nationalist with the immense catalogue of important points referred to by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chelsea (Sir S. Hoare), and consider them in the light of the unsolved difficulties enumerated by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley. The right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs dilated upon the dangers of Dominion status and vague talk about it. Of course, we have always contemplated it as an ultimate goal, but no one has supposed that, expect in a purely ceremonious sense, in the way in which representatives of India attended conferences during the War, that that principle and policy for India would be carried into effect in any time which it is reasonable or useful for us to foresee. The right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs wrote an article a year ago in the "Daily Mail" entitled—the phrase was taken from his own text—"Jerry building for a smash in India."

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE *indicated dissent.*

Mr. CHURCHILL: It is no good the right hon. Gentleman shaking his head, for I have already armed myself with it for greater accuracy. When I heard the concluding portion of the speech of the right hon. and learned Member for Spen Valley, I could not help feeling how very apt was the title of his leader and colleague for his article in the "Daily Mail." The right hon. Gentleman a year ago poured his scorn upon my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition because he alleged that the right hon. Gentleman had gone too far in lending countenance to the idea of Dominion status, which in a particular sense has always been commonly agreed to be the final goal of Indian relationships. A year has passed. I have always cherished the hope that the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs would on this Indian matter come to the rescue of the country as he did in war-time days, but politics exercise a bewitching fascination upon the right hon. Gentleman, and, when politics come in at the door, his zeal for the retention of India flies out

of the window. The right hon. Gentleman is actually supporting Lord Reading's proposals, which go further than those to which the Conservative delegation——[*Interruption.*] Certainly, they go further in several respects than the Conservative delegation or my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition is prepared to go.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE: In what respect?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I do not propose to trespass too long upon the House, but there is not the slightest difficulty in the right hon. Gentleman being furnished with that information. My Noble Friend the Member for Horsham (Earl Winterton) will perhaps be so kind as to meet him when he speaks. What is the reason which is assigned for the sudden downward lurch in British opinion? It is, as we all know, the action of the Indian Princes at the Conference. Of course, I must not seek unduly to impute or assign motives, but is that a reassuring action? Is it a sign that our position is better in India, and that our dangers in that country are less? It strikes me as being the most disquieting feature of all. The action of the Princes may well be due to the belief, now spreading so widely throughout the masses of India, that the British raj will shortly cease to function, and that he will be succeeded by the Congress raj or the Gandhi raj or some other form, and that Great Britain under the Socialists—they do not know in India how mild are the Socialists here—Great Britain under the Socialists and under universal suffrage, if pressed enough, if squeezed enough, if kicked enough, if worried enough will acquiesce in such revolution. In face of this, having to provide for themselves and for their States under the new regime, they have expressed their willingness to enter a federal parliament, and this is paraded as a justification for a new and sudden departure. No greater proof, in my judgment, could be shown of the increasing degeneration of our affairs. So far from justifying a greater confidence, it ought to reveal to us how very near the precipice we have already come.

Will these proposals, after they have been subjected to prolonged discussion, be accepted by the Indian political classes? I read a very remarkable account by the "Manchester Guardian" correspondent who was at the Conference, and I will read one most illuminating passage:

> "The attitude of the older Congress leaders is the least part of the danger. Young India, including the women newly come into politics, is not in a mood to be reasoned with. It regards the Conference simply as a conspiracy of four devils—the devil of British Imperialism, the devil of the States' mediaeval autocracy, the devil of Moslem separation, and, worst of all, the devil of reason and moderation. It will listen to no proposals coming from this quarter. It has acquired the true war mentality, and the unexpected concessions made by Lord Reading"—

I commend this to the Liberal party, because it is taken from the "Manchester Guardian," the most distinguished and consistent advocate of Liberal opinion—

> "are merely taken by it is an indication of weakness and fear and will serve to inflate young India's pretensions and confirm its determination to insist on the enemy's unconditional surrender."

He says later on:

> "To put the whole position briefly, we have to remember that we are now retreating in the face of an active and elated enemy. Before abandoning any position we should be careful to put our Allies firmly in possession of it."

What will be the answer? Will it be an acceptance or a rejection? I apprehend that it will be neither the one nor the other. I apprehend that it will be a dusty answer. Some will accept, and some will reject these proposals. Those who accept them will take them as a means of helping them towards their goal, and those who do not accept them will be busy in seeing that those who have accepted them do not flag in their efforts. Great Britain will be committed and weakened, and the Indian Nationalists will be reinforced and armed with new weapons and free to use them.

Parenthetically, let me address myself to the party opposite. No one can pretend that this draft of a constitution is based upon any democratic conception, or that the Indian Executive and Assembly will in any way represent the masses of India. These masses will be delivered to the mercies of a well-organised, narrowly elected, political and religious oligarchy and caucus. Those 300,000,000 people who are our duty and trust are often forgotten in these political discussions. These 300,000,000 people, who depend for their humble and narrowly spent livelihood upon the peace and order which Britain

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has brought in the years that are past and upon British justice, will be largely removed from our impartial protection, and they will be utterly powerless themselves to control or to make their wishes felt by their new rulers. Already the Montagu Chelmsford reforms have produced a deterioration in every service which has been transferred. They have produced increasing irritation and unrest, and, of course, they have produced an acute revival of the quarrels and rivalries of Moslem and Hindu. This process must continue, and for all the resulting discontents the Viceroy, and the safeguards, and the British officials will get the blame.

It will be so easy for these future rulers, or part rulers of India, to represent all the inevitable evils and unpopularity of carrying on the Government as due to the slow rate at which the British officials and British Government are removing themselves from the country. It is upon them that the odium and onus will fall in the future. The Viceroy is contemplated here as a sort of figure far uplifted above the ordinary range of human and foresight and intelligence, as someone who knows exactly when and how to act, who never acts too soon or too late. He holds these enormous forces in his hands. Month after month, it may be year after year, the Viceroy will be exposed to all the inevitable unpopularity which attaches to the process of governing, and he will be in the position in which the French revolutionists in 1792 placed the King, "Monsieur Veto," directing upon him when he resisted, as he was constitutionally charged to do, measures which were injurious, all the popular displeasure and odium.

I am much indebted to the House for giving me so much attention, and I shall not trespass much longer upon its time, but let me say that I am no stranger to these problems of self-government: I was the Minister in charge in this House of the Transvaal Constitution Act, and I happened, also, to be the Minister in charge of the Irish Free State Act in 1922, and I was also directly concerned in the administrative processes and executive steps necessary to bring both those most remarkable departures in self-government into operation. Of course, there are no parallels between South Africa and Ireland on the one hand and India on the other. No one has pointed that out more clearly and forcibly than the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs. But there are two lessons which I, personally, think my experience enables me to draw. The first is, as has been emphasised from many quarters today, the importance of blunt candour in dealing with those to whom the powers are being transferred, knowing exactly how far you mean to go and knowing, also, exactly where you intend to stop. The other lesson which has been impressed upon me has been that, once the principle is conceded, safeguards and reservations very often prove of no lasting value. I remember the nominated second chamber for the Transvaal. What labour we expended in building that up! I remember some of my most distinguished Liberal colleagues formally persuading themselves, on a nice calculation of electoral possibilities, that a non-Boer Government in the first instance would be returned. All those calculations and devices were swept away. Similarly, in Ireland, once we had decided to place the responsibility on Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Collins we could not be too quick in withdrawing our British military and leaving them brutally to bear the whole force and burden of the task they had assumed.

Nothing of this sort is possible in India; nothing of this kind is contemplated in India, not even by the most forward Member of the present Government. We are not relieving ourselves of burdens and responsibilities in India. We are merely setting a scene for a more complicated controversy, merely creating agencies which will make it more difficult for us to discharge our task. On the one hand, there will be the all-India Parliament, which may well be dominated by forces intent on driving us out of the country as quickly as possible. There will be a Ministry charged with such grave matters *inter alia* as the maintenance of law and order and control of the police. There will be that Ministry, responsible to this all-India Parliament and dependent upon its vote. They hug to themselves the assurance that there must be a two-thirds majority before the Government can be turned out. How long will that last? It is perfectly clear that even if the Government does not resign because there is not a two-thirds

majority, nevertheless a hostile majority can make the course of business in all other matters virtually impracticable.

Simultaneously with these tremendous steps at the centre full responsible Government, in accordance with the recommendations of the Simon Commission, is to be conferred upon the provinces. So you will, as many of the wisest judges thought should be avoided, have a double concurrent convulsion. It might have been thought well to build up those organisms in the provinces before at the same time undertaking this higher and further organisation at the summit. You will have that on the one side; and on the other hand you will have the Viceroy with the Army and with the finance of the Army, which, I am told, may well involve 80 per cent. of the whole expenditure; a Viceroy largely deprived of the machinery and sources of information which now enable him to forestall crime and unrest, and to smooth away difficulties before they come to a head; a Viceroy discredited and divorced from many vital and intimate functions, but armed, nevertheless—of course, in the last resort—with that overwhelming physical force which it should be the care and thought of every man wherever he sits never to employ against the natives of India. The one great aim and object of every Indian administration has been to prevent the British Army being brought into direct contact with Indian disorders.

Undoubtedly this scheme is no solution, and it affords the prospect of no solution, it is no resting place, it is no settlement. The clash and agitation in India will continue, but they will no longer be confined to rioting in the streets or demonstrations in the Legislature. They will invade the heart and the brains of the Government of India. There, at the summit of this wonderful creation, an instrument which, with all it shortcomings, has given peace and progress to nations more varied than the nations of Europe and populations in the aggregate almost as large as China—there, at the summit, by constitutional and Parliamentary weapons now, the process of gnawing and cutting down the safeguards will proceed, stimulated, perhaps, from outside by a continuance of lawlessness and rioting and of worse crimes, for the prevention of which you will no longer have the primary responsibility. What, may I ask, will be your line of moral and logical resistance then? You have declared that the safeguards are only transitory, suited to a transition period, they are temporary transitory expedients, apologetically adopted pending what anyone who reads this, and the emphasis assigned to this passage, can only understand means the rapid and speedy realisation of full Dominion status. The struggle will go on, it will only be aggravated, it will proceed under conditions in which British rule will be shorn of all its argument and of half its apparatus. It will proceed steadily towards the goal which those who are driving this policy forward, both here in this country and in India, no longer hesitate to avow, namely, the goal of complete severance between Great Britain and India of every tie except tradition, which in India is adverse, and sentiment, which in India is hostile. Sir, I say that is a frightful prospect to have opened up so wantonly, so recklessly, so incontinently and in so short a time.

How will the British nation feel about all this? I am told that they do not care. [*Interruption.*] I am told that from one quarter or another. They are all worried by unemployment or taxation or absorbed in sport and crime. The great liner is sinking in a calm sea. One bulkhead after another gives way; one compartment after another is bilged; the list increases; she is sinking; but the captain and the officers and the crew are all in the saloon dancing to the jazz band. But wait till the pasengers find out what is their position! For 30 years I have watched from a central position the manifestations of the will power of Great Britain, and I do not believe the people will consent to be edged, pushed, talked and cozened out of India. No nation of which I am aware, great or small, has ever voluntarily or tamely suffered such an overwhelming injuiry to its interests or such a harsh abrogation of its rights. After all, there are British rights and interests in India. Two centuries of effort and achievement, lives given on a hundred fields, far more lives given and consumed in faithful and devoted service to the Indian people themselves. All this has earned us rights of our own in India. When the nation finds that our whole position is in jeopardy, that her

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whole work and duty in India is being brought to a standstill, when the nation sees the individuals among our fellow-countrymen scattered about, with their women and children, throughout this enormous land, in hourly peril amidst the enormous Indian multitude. [*Interruption.*] When, at any moment, this may produce shocking scenes, then I think there will be a sharp awakening, then, I am sure, that a reaction of the most vehement character will sweep this country and its unmeasured strength will once more be used. That, Sir, is an ending which I trust and pray we may avoid, but it is an ending to which, step by step and day by day, we are being remorselessly and fatuously conducted.

Mr. MARLEY: I think hon. Members on both sides of the House, however much they may disagree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill), will certainly admire the courage with which he has put his case, and even though I may differ with some of my friends here I am going to say that there are some points in his speech with which I find myself in agreement. It is perfectly true that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping has spoken with courage and conviction, but it is equally true to say that the right hon. Gentleman has not told us what he would do in circumstances like those in which the Government find themselves at the present moment. We want to hear the right hon. Gentleman's alternative and what he is prepared to suggest as a remedy for the position in which the Government now find themselves. I agree with what has been said about the Government persuading to come over here to attend the Conference a number of nobles who are not representative of the mass of the Indian people, and I agree that these Princes could not pledge India to any conclusions at the Round Table Conference. I also agree with the statement that we have made certain concessions at the Conference merely because of the demands of the people, and the power which some of them hold in India. I do not intend to proceed to a detailed analysis of the proposals outlined in the Blue Book. I compliment the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon) upon his microscopical examination of small points.

Sir J. SIMON: Which small points?

Mr. MARLEY: I mean those points which the right hon. and learned Gentleman presumed the Indians would not be able to overcome without further assistance. I am aware that the right hon. and learned Gentleman did not put it so plainly, but if any Indian had been present in this House, or if an Indian had gone to explain in America the sectarian differences in education which exist in this country, he might have said that it would be impossible to devise a constitution which would be workable and practicable. The Conference has for the most part been discussing academic problems and performing exercises in political science. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Chelsea (Sir S. Hoare) speaking on behalf of the Conservative party, said that he was a realist, and he proceeded to say that he is in favour of definite reservations which to my mind would leave practically nothing in the shape of control of India in the hands of the Government of India. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Chelsea reserves such important questions as finance, foreign affairs, the Army, and other matters, and he further stated that the question of paramountcy was to be retained by the Viceroy, and in those circumstances he was agreeable that India should have Home Rule. That proposal reminds me of the man who was carrying out his master"s orders from 6 o'clock in the morning until 11 o'clock at night, and he was told that the rest of the day was at his own disposal.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Chelsea said that until he knew more definitely what the reservations and the safeguards were he could not pledge his party to the recommendations contained in the Blue Book. I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that there are also realists in India. There are Indian realists just as there are realists in the Conservative party. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping is a very staunch realist. What is the accusation made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Chelsea against the recommendations in the Blue Book? It is that the Blue Book is full of fine phrases and vague generalities which

need more clear definition. Suppose that is said about the Blue Book by those in India, and suppose that they come to the conclusion that it is too full of vague phrases and generalities to give them what they require and suppose that they turn it down?

We have been told by the Prime Minister in this Debate that the Indians who came to the Conference came at great personal risk, and many of them were told by hon. Members opposite that they were holding their rights and political liberties in their hands. Surely that indicates a position in India which is not viewed with anything like a real perspective by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping. If that be the position, what are hon. Gentlemen opposite going to do? Are we going to have a further conference in India sitting and talking and coming to no definite conclusions? Is it possible to have another conference in India if the conditions are so bad that the people who came to talk in London came with their lives in their hands? It might be true to say that those who came to the Round Table Conference did not represent the modern aspirations of the people of India. The hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Foot) told us that the words "too late" were written on these proposals. Is it true that, if we take the course suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping, we shall promote peace by repression? Is the right hon. Gentleman prepared to say that the Government would be able to promote law and order in India by repressive methods?

Here I would like to make one remark about a phrase used by the Prime Minister. I never expected to hear from a Labour Prime Minister the statement that we must be careful not to encourage that section of India which, under the name of passive resisters, was really carrying out the campaign of lawlessness. I disagree with that statement, and I am going to ask the Prime Minister, as a Labour Member, if people are faced with a Government in which they have no share, and against whom they have no chance of remedying their grievances and if the Army is turned against them, whether they are to be considered lawless? I did not think that would ever have been said by a Labour leader. There may have been one or two officials shot here and there, but the mass of the people engaged in passive resistance have not been assassins in any sense of the term.

I now come to a more general examination of the Blue Book itself. We have been told that the Blue Book is full of vague phrases and generalities, so vague in fact that hon. Members in this House who have spoken about safeguards and reservations have interpreted them differently. I noticed that when the Prime Minister spoke he said that these reservations and safeguards would be so far in the background that they would never be of any importance to the working of the new constitution, and they would only be behind the constitution in the way in which they are behind other constitutions in this country, and that there must be ultimately some force to maintain law and order.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Chelsea is not satisfied with these safeguards, but in any case they are to be immediately operative, and put right in the forefront of the safeguards for British interests in India to maintain law and order. I have only one observation to make in regard to safeguards and reservations. I do not think it is possible, in the drafting of any constitution, to lay down safeguards and reservations, and at the same time be sure that by the laying down of safeguards, and the making of those reservations, you are securing anything at all. Our greatest safeguard in India will be if the people of India are contented and happy in their co-operation with the Government of India. Failing that, you may have as many safeguards and reservations as you like, but you will not get any measure of assistance from the people, and disorder will grow.

We are told that these proposals constitute, not a new constitution, but merely the principles upon which a constitution may ultimately be framed. How far are we going to get along the line of framing this new constitution? All the speeches which have been made in this Debate, with the exception of the one made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping, have claimed that in order that this constitution, which is adumbrated in the Blue Book, may be drawn up, we must have a continuance of the atmosphere of the Con-

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ference, and that the good will displayed at that Conference must be transformed and transferred to India. We must have that fellowship and good feeling which made frank and free discussion possible at the Conference, and which led to proposals coming forward in the form we find before us to-day. What prospect have we of getting that atmosphere in India when as late as last week the Legislative Assembly had to deal with repressive measures, and was told by the Viceroy that he would have to take those powers and introduce measures of repression? How do actions like the execution of the Sholapur prisoners make it easier to govern India? The Round Table Conference agreed that the Viceroy should be asked, in the interests of peace in India, to postpone those executions, and transform the sentence into one of penal servitude. That failed, and only a week ago we had the execution of these prisoners, who were considered to be martyrs in the cause of political freedom. I want to say three things from the

5.0 p.m.

Labour point of view. I join with the right hon. Member for Epping in his last remarks with regard to our party. If the Constitution as adumbrated in the Blue Book is workable and is put into operation, where do the masses of India stand in relation to self-government given by, we presume, a Labour Government? The Prime Minister during his speech mentioned one of the Punjab Provinces where he had agreed to give seats to the various communities, until he had agreement on all seats except one among Sikhs, Hindus and Moslems, and then at the Conference he calmly offered that one seat to Labour. When a protest was made by the Labour representatives on the Committee, he said, "I have no further seats to offer you," although 65 per cent. of the inhabitants of the Province belonged to the Industrial and Depressed Classes.

Are we going to have any reservations for Depressed Classes as Depressed Classes? Is there going to be separate representation for the industrial workers in the industrial areas. I am informed by Indian friends that the one thing that is breaking down untouchability more rapidly and to a greater extent than everything else is the federation and trade unionism among people who are working side by side, and who find that, whether they belong to one caste or another, when it comes to being paid for work done, they are treated exactly the same by an Indian as by a European employer. That is a brotherhood which, up to the present, has been absent among the Indian people.

Are we going to have a Constitution in India so framed as to guarantee representation in all the legislatures for Indian princes, who have been and are quite well able to look after themselves, and are coming into federation in order to get themselves out of the hands of the Political Department, chiefly and because they have an eye on greater power for themselves in India in the future? Will there be reservations for them in both Chambers? It is true that they are to nominate their representatives in the Lower Chamber, and nothing is to be done for the Depressed Classes or the industrial workers. They are not even to be given an adult franchise, which might help to even things up, because the Depressed Classes and the industrial workers might, after 10 or 15 years of organisation, be able to capture seats and get proper political representation in the government of India. There is not even a guarantee that the property qualification will be low enough to enable even 20 per cent. of the Depressed Classes or the industrial workers to get representation. Even when an allowance is made on the franchise, that it is to be based on any kind of income, whether wages, or property, or any other form, there is to be no representation.

My appeal is that, if we are in office and in power when anything comes out of this Blue Book, if it is acceptable to India, we shall assist, and reservation shall be made so that some form of Government shall be introduced in India which will give adequate representation to the Depressed Classes and industrial workers of India. We understand that the right hon. Member for Epping was jibing at us on this side for not taking proper care of this matter. He did not give us any encouragement to ask the Government for this, but we ask the Government sincerely to see, if we can give representation to princes, if representation can be reserved for merchant communities, European communities, chambers of commerce, bankers and

others, that these people, the workers, if the franchise is not made broad enough to secure their adequate representation, shall have provision reserved for them in any future government granted under the auspices of a Labour Government in this country.

We are told that the success of the new Constitution will depend upon how the structure is built up out of these proposals. The success of the new Constitution of India will depend upon how far it gives room for the representation of the movement which is growing in India to-day. If it ignores that movement, if it attempts to create a position in which there is no elasticity, to form a Constitution with reservations of this or that kind which will prevent a development of the movement which is growing in India to-day, you will not, by giving a large measure of responsible government to India, solve any problem at all, but will promote what we on this side want to avoid if we can, namely, civil war in India and the breaking up of India because of the clash of class interests. The clash may be of the interests of princes against vested interests of other kinds, it may be of European interests against Indian merchant interests, but there will be a clash along economic lines which can only be avoided if the Depressed Classes and those who are less articulate than others in India have an opportunity of expressing themselves and getting representation and making themselves heard in the government of the country. Along these lines we can avoid a great deal of trouble.

I appeal to the Secretary of State to get the co-operation of all those in India who did not come to the Conference. I have talked to many of the Moderates and many of the Left Wing leaders who came to the Conference, and with one voice they said that it was necessary to get the support of those who really matter in India to-day. They said in all their speeches and conversations that they felt that they could not deliver the goods in India unless they could get a generous measure of self-government here; that unless they could get something which would appeal to the people of India and would give the substance of self-government, it would be no use their going back and asking for the co-operation of those who had remained away from this particular Conference. In this regard, the Secretary of State can do something very useful. He can instruct the new Viceroy, not merely that there should be a general amnesty to political prisoners and the withdrawal of repressive measures, but he could at the same time put self-government into action by agreeing to a general election, and promising beforehand that he will consult the leader of the majority party in relation at least to the non-official members of his Council, if he still feels that he ought to keep the official members. In relation to the Provinces he might also take similar action, and in that way give evidence, not by vague phrases, not by words and promises such as are contained in this Blue Book, but by action, that there has been a change of spirit and of heart so far as His Majesty's Government are concerned.

Miss RATHBONE: I want to draw attention to an aspect of the work of the Round Table Conference which has been touched upon only very lightly to-day, namely, its bearing on the future status of women in the Constitution of India. That subject was not altogether ignored by the Conference, though it received much less attention than its importance deserves. It was touched upon in the reports of two sub-committees in three respects, and, considering the position of women in the past, and of the majority of women even now in India, these three references are, perhaps, not the least significant symptoms of a changing era. In the first place, the Franchise Sub-Committee definitely acknowledged that:

> "Under the existing franchise, the number of women voters is infinitesimal compared with that of men. No system of franchise can be considered as satisfactory, or as likely to lead to good government, where such a great disparity exists between the voting strength of the two sexes."

That is a notable admission, and perhaps, one which could not have been obtained from this House some years ago. They went on to recommend that the Franchise Commission which has to work out the details of franchise proposals should prescribe special qualifications for women voters so as to remedy this disparity, and then the report of the Minorities Sub-Committee, which was debarred, by failure to arrive at an agreement between the religious com-

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munities, from making definite recommendations, at least notes the general agreement that women should continue to be eligible for election to legislative bodies on the same footing as men, and that, in addition, at least for the first three elections, 5 per cent. of the seats should be reserved for women, to be filled, perhaps, by proportional representation, by those already elected. Lastly, the Minorities Sub-Committee notes that:

"One of the chief proposals brought before the sub-committee was the inclusion in the Constitution of a declaration of fundamental rights, safeguarding the cultural and religious life of the various communities, and securing to every individual, without discrimination as to race, caste, creed or sex, the free exercise of economic, social and civil rights."

If these proposals are implemented, they will do much to safeguard the future of women in India. We owe them partly, I think, to the presence at the Conference of the two Indian women delegates who alone represented their sex in a Conference of nearly 100 men, and who by general consent put forward the claims of women with restrained but moving eloquence. There are, however, factors which make anxious those who care, not only for the future welfare of women in India, but for the good name of this country. It is worth noting that only in those sub-committees of which the two women delegates were members was any reference made at all to the claims and needs of women.

Notice taken that 40 *Members were not present; House counted; and,* 40 *Members being present*—

Miss RATHBONE: I am glad to see that the Prime Minister has just entered, because I want to ask him a question. I have quoted the recommendation of the Minorities Committee that a constitutional safeguard should be introduced preventing discrimination on the grounds of religion, race or sex. It is rather perturbing to find that, when the Prime Minister made his speech in the Conference, he gave a promise on behalf of his Government that such a safeguard should be introduced into the constitution, but that it should be a safeguard based upon discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, sect, or caste. May I ask him specifically was it by accident or by design that he changed the word "sex" in the recommendations of the Minorities Sub-Committee to the word "sect," a superfluous word since the word religion had already been used.

The PRIME MINISTER: I can answer that straight away. There was no change in the word at all It was "sect." There is no question of giving women a minority right. It was only suggested by one of the women delegates that, if the worst came to the worst, they should have a 5 per cent. representation, but on the constitutional declaration there was no question of sex. It was sect.

Miss RATHBONE: May I read the words of the Minorities Sub-Committee? I recognise that it was not a recommendation, because the committee made no recommendation, owing to the failure to agree on the part of the Moslems and Hindus. Practically every part of the Minorities Sub-Committee's report takes the form of reporting considerations. These are the words they use:

"One of the chief proposals brought before the sub-committee was the inclusion in the constitution of a declaration of the fundamental rights safeguarding the culture and religion of the leading foreign communities, and securing to every individual, without discrimination as to race, caste, creed or sex, the free exercise of economic social and civil rights."

The PRIME MINISTER: I am afraid that is a printer's eror. It really was not "sex." It was "sect." I am so much obliged to the hon. Lady for drawing my attention to it.

Miss RATHBONE: I regret it very much. I hoped the misprint was the other way. Considering, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon) reminded us, how much importance India attaches to declarations of principle, would it not have been reasonable that the safeguarding of constitutional rights should have safeguarded women in a country where women have been for centuries in a condition of subjection against discrimination on the ground of sex? After all, what safeguard have we, what hope can we have for the future of women in the constitution of India, when these questions are transferred to India itself, unless we have some assurance that the voice of Indian women themselves will be heard and heard in reasonable numbers?

Can we put our trust in the present Government of India? Of all the documents that we had an opportunity of studying before the Conference met, the report of the Statutory Commission, the report of the Indian Central Committee, the reports of Provincial Legislative Committees appointed to aid the Statutory Commission, by far the most reactionary, where women were concerned, was the despatch of the Government of India itself. In one passage it alluded, without endorsing, and with what I may be wrong in fancying was a sneer, to the declaration of the Statutory Commission that the women's movement held the key of progress, and that from it there might develop incalculable results to India. It went on to criticise and to disagree with all the proposals of the Statutory Commission with regard to a greatly extended franchise for women, summarising the unfavourable elements of Indian opinion and ignoring completely the far greater body of favourable evidence. Can there be any wonder, if that is the message of the Government of India to these women, few perhaps in number but fervent in their purpose and rapidly increasing in number, that they are being driven into the arms of the Congress party, giving as their reason, as one of them put it quite explicitly, that

> "The British Government has been adopting a policy of utter indifference, neutrality, and sometimes direct opposition, to all our social reform measures. Hence even we women have come to realise that a foreign Government has no sympathy with the legitimate aspirations of the people and can never actively help in mending our defective social system."

Speaking of the past, speaking as an outsider, speaking as one who has had to judge by documentary evidence, I say that that charge, broadly speaking, is true, and that the attitude of the Government of India towards those terrible social evils which have weighed upon the women of India has been one of timidity amounting to cowardice and of frigid indifference. Out of sight has indeed been out of mind. Their attitude has always seemed to me rather like that of a stepfather who is always saying to his wife, "They are your daughters, my dear. Send them to school or not as you like. Marry them to whom you like and as early as you like. Their treatment in disease, the safeguarding of their health, is entirely your affair. Do as you like, providing you do not cause a scandal, and spend as little money as possible."

If anyone thinks that is an exaggerated charge, I challenge him to study the evidence himself as to the terrible social evils that weigh upon women in India, and to study the evidence of the attitude of the Government of India throughoutout the greater part of its history towards those evils. The sands are rapidly running out. I entreat Members of the Government to use their influence so far as possible to show that they are not less ready than their Indian colleagues and friends to ensure that the voice of women shal be heard upon their own claims, and their own needs, by every consultative body that is set up to complete the terms of the constitution, or, when the constitution is framed, to work it during those formative and momentous years when the life of India will be flowing into fresh channels and forming new moulds. Of all the millions of whom Great Britain has been the trustees during the past century, perhaps the least able to speak for themselves, the most numerous of all the minorities, but the least vociferous, have been the women. Do not let it go forth to history that their fate has been a matter of indifference to the British Government at the very end of its rule. East and West, in old countries or in new, human nature is much the same. There is only one safeguard for any one section of people who are differentiated from others, whether by race or creed or colour or sex. There is only one safeguard against their oppression or, what is oftener a danger, unintentional neglect and mishandling, and that is the safeguard of their full and real participation in the working of self-governing institutions. I entreat the Government to do whatever lies in their power to see that women are able to take their share in promoting and shaping their own destinies in the future government of India.

Mr. BROCKWAY: I have been sitting throughout this Debate, and I cannot refrain from making some comment upon previous speeches even though the spokesmen are not at present in the House. I want to say regarding the speech which we heard from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill), that, if the policy of the

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Government during the last 18 months has not succeeded in securing the co-operation of all the Indian representatives, the kind of policy which he has outlined would have prevented any Indian representative from conferring with the Government. If the policy of our Government has led to a situation where 60,000 political offenders are now in Indian gaols, the policy which he has outlined would have led to a situation where the number of Indian political prisoners would have run to 600,000. If at the present time there is on the horizon a glimmer of hope of a settlement of the Indian problem, if the policy which he has outlined had been pursued there would have been nothing but utter and black hopelessness. The right hon. Gentleman, in his concluding passages, stated that it had always been the policy of the British authorities in India to refrain from employing the troops against the Indian people. If the spirit of his speech had been in the administration of the British Government during the last 20 months, and if the spirit of his speech were to animate the British administration during the coming months, the British authorities in India could not have any other recourse except to use the troops in India against the revolt of the Indian people which would arise from that policy. I am amazed that a Member of this House who has a reputation for statesmanship should deliver, in the present situation of the relationships of Britain and India, the kind of speech which has been delivered from the Front Bench of the Conservative party this evening, a speech which can only make the relations between Britain and India far more difficult of a peaceful solution.

I want also to make some comment upon the speech which has been delivered in the House by the right hon. and learned Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon). I have very great respect for the mind and, if I may say so, the outlook of that right hon. and learned Member, but I confess that I have rarely heard a speech so unconvincing as the speech which he contributed to our Debate to-day. He said that the difference in the outlook of the British and the Indian mind was that the British devolves from the particular to the general, and the Indian devolves from the general to the particular. He said that the Indian people would probably desire a constitution near their ideal which did not work rather than a constitution far from their ideal which worked better. I confess that there was a time when I was a member of the Liberal party, and one of the appeals which was made to me by the Liberal party of 20 years ago was that self-government is better than good government without self-government. Liberalism used to stand for a sense of democracy and a sense of freedom. We had some expression of that in the speech of the hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Foot) this afternoon, but from the speech of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley, that which represents the best in Liberalism was very far distant.

I will turn from these comments upon speeches which have been delivered from other benches to the situation as I see it. We must all recognise that there has been an extraordinary development of public opinion in this country and in political opinion since the Round Table Conference began. There are two reasons for that development. I should say that the first reason was the extraordinary unanimity and the very great ability with which the Indians at the Round Table Conference put their case. I have always held the view that those Indians did not represent the great vital political forces in India. While I have held that view, I have recognised that many of them were men of very great service and very great devotion to the Indian cause, and I do not withhold that tribute to the contribution which they have made in that direction. But I am convinced that a very much greater force has been responsible for this change of public opinion and change in the political opinion in all parties even than the case which has been put before the Round Table Conference, and that force has been the strength of the movement in India itself. I am certain if it had not been for the new mass movement which has been arising in India and which has been demanding the right of self-government and independence in India, that, in the first place, the Indian representatives at the Round Table Conference would not have gone as far as they did, and, in the second place, the politicians in this country would not have realised, the situation being so serious in

India, that they also must go much further than the Debates a few months ago had suggested to this House.

I think that it is true to say that the unseen power, even at the Round Table Conference, has been that little figure Mahatma Gandhi in an Indian gaol, and that behind that unseen power have been 60,000 other Indians at least, that it is they who have been making Indian history, and that it is upon them and the movement which they represent that the future relationships of Britain and India depend. We may make our declaration, but, unless we are able to make contacts and a settlement with those forces, there is no hope of the declarations which we write on paper ever being realised in actual fact in the Indian constitution.

I must, though it is an unpleasant duty, draw attention to the situation in India while the Round Table Conference has been meeting in this country. I never dreamt that I would live to be a Member of this Parliament with a Labour Government in office, during whose regime 60,000 men and women would be in Indian gaols as political offenders. The Prime Minister is not present at this moment, but I would beg whoever replies for the Government on India to-night to interpret in a different way from the impression which it gives the phrase which the Prime Minister used in his speech to-day about the Congress movement in India. The impression which that phrase gave, and which I am sure it will give in India itself, is, that the passive resistence movement in India has merely been the cloak for the use of other methods. [An HON. MEMBER: "Shame!"] Of course, in a situation of this kind in India there has been violence.

It is inevitable, when you have such a situation, that there should be deeds of violence. The miracle is that you could have had a mass movement of the kind with such little violence, with such acceptance of the philosophy of Gandhi and with such an amazing expression of the non-violence which is behind it. I challenge whoever speaks for the Government to deny that of the 60,000 men and women who are now in Indian gaols at least 55,000 of them have not even been charged with violence. There are there merely for demonstrating the right to speak, the right to hold meetings, the right to hold processions, the right to take part in the picketing of shops and in the hundreds or so rights of that character for which the charge of violence has never been made. If the Government desire any hope of co-operation in the settlement of the Indian problem from the Indian National Congress, I beg whoever speaks from the Front Bench to-night to remove the unfortunate impression which the words of the Prime Minister have caused.

I proceed from that consideration to urge that if there is to be any settlement of this problem, contact with and participation of the Congress representatives is absolutely essential. May I voice the heartiest welcome of the fact that Mr. Gandhi and certain Indian leaders have now been released. Jawaharlal Nehru, a Socialist comrade of ours, who has been in our homes, who is our friend, and of whom we felt every moment that he has been in gaol in India as a moment when part of our own personalities has been in prison, the great Indian woman leader, and Vallabhai Patel, the heroic figure representing the peasants, have been released. May I beg the representatives of the Government, if they really want the Congress to participate in discussions which will lead to a solution of the Indian problem, to go much beyond the release of the leaders. I say to them, do you really believe that Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Vallahbai Patel will consent to negotiate with you while their 60,000 followers remain in Indian gaols? Are you going to adopt the policy of releasing the leaders, who are in positions of privilege, whose names are known, and leave the peasants and the workers in Indian gaols? Do you imagine for one moment that in such circumstances the leaders will be prepared to negotiate with you? I ask the Government to do the big and bold thing. I ask them to open the prison doors to every political offender in India. I ask them to take an action which will create a new spirit in India, where negotiation and agreement may be possible. I say to the Government, desiring that that agreement may be brought about, that unless they will have the courage to act in that big way they may release the leaders of India, temporarily, but they will not be able to

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reach a settlement of the Indian problem with those leaders whilst their followers remain in prison.

I want to make particular reference to certain persons in India who have now been 20 months in prison, and whose trial is not over. I refer to the prisoners involved in the so-called Merut conspiracy case. I have read the charges against those prisoners very carefully, and I say there is not a tittle of evidence in the case for the prosecution which justifies the retention of these men for one single further day in prison. They are charged because they have been concerned in forming a workers' and peasants' party in India. That party, admittedly, had Communist initiative, but its programme is a modified programe, and many others than Communists have been engaged in it. I would suggest that when the Government are considering the case for an amnesty of Indian political prisoners they should not only have in mind the prisoners who have been sentenced during the course of the civil disturbance campaign, but they should think of the Merut prisoners, and of the prisoners of 1919, and that they should release entirely from Indian gaols all men and women who are there for political or trade union offences.

As a further contribution to Government policy that would bring about a solution of the Indian problem, I would urge that during the last two years a new mass democratic movement has been arising in India and that any Constitution which will operate in India must express that new movement. That movement has been sweeping aside communal differences and caste differences. Through it the women of India have broken through their seclusion and won a freedom which they have never won before. Unless that movement is reflected in any new Constitution in India it is bound to make that Constitution inoperative. I suggest that so far as the proposals of the Round Table Conference are known they do not in actual fact give an opportunity to this new vital force in India to find reflection in the new Constitution.

Let us, for example, look at the Federal Government which is to be established. I know that the proportions of the representation are not yet settled, but it is likely that the Princes and the representatives of the Princes will number from 125 to 150 of the 450 members of that Federal Government. The determination of the offices of the Executive is to depend upon a two-thirds voice in joint session of the bodies forming the Federal Government, and that means that the Princes and a few members of the Upper House in the Federal Government will be the real determining factor as to whether the Executive shall continue in India or not. That is a formidable force against the new democratic force which has arisen in India, and there is a great danger that while you may be abolishing the official and nominated members, the Princes and those whom they represent, with the members of the Upper House, will form the larger section and will be a still greater obstacle to the expression of democratic views and of democratic beliefs than the Indian legislature.

I would point also to the very limited franchise which is suggested for the new form of government. Within our own Labour movement, when many of us have demanded self-government for India, the retort has always been that a self-governing India would only represent the landlord and capitalist classes, and that they would exploit the workers more severely than had been the case under British rule. Yet the very members of our party who have opposed those of us who have been advocating self-government for India are now proposing a form of self-government which places nearly all the power in India in the hands of the landlord, capitalist and professional classes.

It is suggested that the franchise should be extended to 25 per cent. of the adult population, and it may fall to a minimum of 10 per cent. There is to be special representation of the landlord and the commercial classes. In view of the vital movement which is arising from the masses of the people, the opinions of the peasants and industrial workers in a constitution of this kind, will find no expression and a conflict between the new movement and the constitution is bound to occur. The Prime Minister has said that the reservations are only in the background, but if that conflict occurs these reservations will have to be operative and British intervention will again be used against the masses of the

people who are going forward to political, social and economic liberty. About the reservations I will only say this, that despite all that has been said about them they do represent a distrust of the capacity of Indians to govern themselves. Instead of these reservations I suggest that India should be fully and completely trusted to govern herself, and that within that representation we could work out mutual agreements which deal with the interests and considerations that are involved.

I am confident that ultimately this country will have to recognise the right of India to full self-government and self-determination, and I mean by that not only the right to decide what form of Government India shall have within the British Empire but the right to claim absolute independence. We may shut our eyes to the development of that opinion, but it represents the new forces which have arisen in India. It is true, as the right hon. Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) has said, that no Empire has yet been dissolved by a willing abdication of the power that is supreme. Empires in the past have always been overthrown either by the revolt of the subject nation or the revolt of the subject class in the Empire itself. I had hoped that the Labour and Socialist movement in this country would inaugurate a new era in which Imperialism would be dissolved not by the forces of revolt, but where labour in this country would co-operate with the subject people in bringing about freedom and independence of the people politically crushed. If that was our object and our goal history will give us greater honour if we pursue this as our object and our goal than if we pursue the alternative policy of seeking to repress people who have seen freedom and who desire freedom. In the long run nothing that can be done will prevent them realising that freedom.

Colonel LANE FOX: There are many others who want to take part in the Debate and I will, therefore, refrain from answering some of the points of the hon. Member for Leyton, East (Mr. Brockway). He is an idealist; some of us have grave doubts whether he is at all practical. That is the only comment I will make on his speech, because I only intend to speak for a very short time. The Debate began rather on the lines of rhapsody, a great many bouquets were thrown about, and it is well that that line should have been slightly changed by the rather cold douche of the right hon. and learned Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon), followed by the speech of the right hon. Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill). It may be that the jeremiads of the right hon. Member for Epping were good in setting the balance of the Debate more clearly, but I ask: What on earth is the use of his making that speech now? In those years, when many of us thought that mistakes were being made by the late Mr. Montagu, the right hon. Member for Epping was a Liberal Minister and responsible for the decisions which were taken and which have brought forward the cause of self-government in India by a very rapid movement to a very advanced position. That was the time when he should have made that speech; to make it now is to absolutely ignore the realities of the situation and the commitments of the British Empire.

I wish more than I can express that the right hon. Member for Epping could have travelled round with the members of the Simon Commission and got more in touch with the realities of India. If he had he would realise more fully the mischief that might be made by the speech he has delivered this evening. I regret very much to have to say this. He posed as the champion of the India Commission and says how very badly we have been treated. I am prepared to admit that the Commission has been treated in a strange manner. We were sent out with acclamation and by a unanimous vote of this House. We worked hard, and we produced a result which has been very much commended, for which we are most grateful. But when the question of a Conference arises this document is at once to be hidden away, not to be even mentioned, and no one who was on the Commission is to take part in the Conference. I have no personal feeling in the matter at all. I would far rather be a help by being excluded from the Conference, quite as ready as I was to give what work and brains I could to the work of the Commission and the preparation of their report.

When the right hon. Member for Epping says that the Conference has served no good purpose and failed to bring the very people who alone can deliver the goods

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it is an entire misconception. The Conference has not brought the extremists and the congressmen into it, and no one ever thought it would. There was never any prospect of bringing in the extremists. They refused to confer with the members of the Simon Commission, and it was not to be expected that they would come over here and confer direct with the statesmen of this country. But what the Conference has accomplished is to bring a number of representative men from India together in this country and to bring the great difficulties of the Indian problem before the public mind in this country in a way they have never been brought before. The people of this country have been educated into the real difficulties of the situation in India, as we saw it: it has done far more to teach the British people the real problems of India than anything else. What was the use of making a speech of that sort at this moment? This subject is far too serious for jests, and I hope that the mischief of the speech the right hon. Gentleman has made this evening will soon pass over in India.

I want again to emphasise the point made by the right hon. and learned Member for Spen Valley. There has been a great deal of enthusiasm shown in the earlier part of this Debate. The speeches made have suggested that a great step had been taken and that practically a constitution for India was in view. I beg the House and the country to realise that we are only at the very fringe of things. I invite hon. Members to look at the Blue Book. If they turn to page 24, they will find, at the bottom, a long paragraph in which the Committee urge that "every posible alternative should be explored before a final decision is taken." On the next page, on the question of an adverse vote, they say, "The subject should be further explored." On page 26, the sub-committee recommend that another matter should be "further explored." On page 61, on the question of the Indianisation of the Army—these things are only samples—it is stated:

"The difference in these two views being fundamental,"—

I ask the House to note the word "fundamental"

"the sub-committee decided to incorporate them both in its report."

In view of all this, is it not absurd to suggest that we have done more than arrive at the very vaguest outline and the most blurred suggestion of a constitution for India? We must realise that it will take many years of labour and the utmost good will before anything can result from the work of this Conference. I do not wish to take too pessimistic a view, but we must recognise the difficulties of the situation, and it would be fatal if the Government tried to make us believe that they have started on a great new era, with the prospect of immediate success. India is no more one nation that is Europe. In many respects the divisions between the various nations in India are greater and more definite than are those between European nations. Take only the question of religion. The whole of Europe practically professes one religion, the Christian religion. It is true that there are differences between the various churches, but the basis is the same. In India you get fundamental differences in religion, so great that the various communities cannot co-operate with each other or live together or have any truck at all with each other. That is only one illustration of the great difficulties to be surmounted before any federal system can be set up involving unanimity, co-operation and good will amongst the various communities in India.

I want to congratulate the delegation of all parties upon having avoided showing party differences, on having achieved a certain amount of agreement, and on having sent Indians away in an atmosphere of good will. It is well to remember that any unfortunate or unwise speech made to-night may well have the effect of helping to wither the olive branch. In India there are no political parties in the sense in which we understand them here. Though the Indians who came over here are representative men who are immensely respected in their own country, they cannot produce the support of a political party in the sense that the statesmen of this country can. There is only one political party of any strength in India, and that is the Congress party, which is against any sort of participation, in good will or anything else, with this country. The men who have come here with great courage and at great

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risk, will undoubtedly be the object of very serious and violent attacks in India —attacks far more virulent than ever occur in this country. Indians are very sensitive to that kind of abuse and attack. These men have undoubtedly shown great courage in coming here, as did the Indians who came on the Central Committee and co-operated with our Statutory Commission in India.

The main thing I want to stress is that this is going to be a long and difficult business. It is vital that we should keep out of these discussions anything in the shape of party differences amongst ourselves. This must be an effort made by all parties co-operating. It is not going to be done in a month or in a year. It is going to spread over a period of years before any complete solution or satisfactory result can be reached. It may spread over many governments. It will be the duty of the Governments that succeed this one, to carry on the work from one to another. You cannot change a policy of this kind. The British Empire is committed beyond recall to the policy of gradually giving self-government to India, and it will be the duty of all Governments to make the best use of the opportunities that come to them. Unless this country can provide a series of Governments which will work in the spirit of harmony with the idea of real benefit to India, we cannot hope to save the situation in India, or provide a solution which will be any credit to ourselves or have any chance of retaining India as a happy and contented and satisfactory element in the British Empire.

Earl WINTERTON: I have had a longer experience of Indian administration than anyone in the House. In addition, I have travelled as extensively in the East as most Members of the House, and can claim to have the friendship or acquaintance of as many Indians as most Members of the House. I would like to say that I am speaking primarily from the point of view of opinions that I have formed as a result of my experience, brought to bear upon the present situation. I have no reason to suppose that anything I shall say will be in conflict with the views held by my right hon. Friend and leader, who is to speak later. I shall confine myself to dealing with two points that seem to arise, two distinct though related issues, when we are considering the framework and ground plan of any future constitution for India, which must be the maximum that can be claimed for the result of the recent Conference. The two points which arise are these: Firstly, will the resolutions as put forward at the Conference, given good will, work eventually into a constitution; and, is the good will there?

Speaking from the point of view of seven years experience of the working of the government of India, I would point out something that has not yet been emphasised in this Debate. That is that India has a written constitution. That constitution is the main machinery of government of a territory, as large as Europe and almost as diverse, which had never been held together effectively as a single entity until the British went to India. That is the primary fact which we have to consider in connection with this question. Secondly, it represents—a fact that I think is not known to everyone in this House and certainly not to many outside—the work of Parliament for generations. It started, indeed, in the days of the old John Company, but there have been constant alterations and additions all based on experience and patient investigation of statesmen and administrators, Indian and British, for 100 or 150 years. I, therefore, want to point out to all, and not least to my right hon. and hon. Friends who so admirably represented the Conservative party at this Conference, the task which will eventually be necessitated in applying the proposals, if that is not too strong a word to use, or the decisions that were reached at the Conference to the amendment of that constitution.

In 1919, much of the machinery was scrapped and new machinery was introduced to be worked by Indians themselves. As has been pointed out already in this Debate, it took months to do that and Parliament could not have effected, and was not asked to effect, the change until the details had been worked out in advance. If, even a bare majority, let alone all of the proposals of the Conference, are to be put into an Act of Parliament, as they will have to be in order to be operative, an immense amount of Parliamentary work will be necessitated. Here there can be no difference of opinion in any quarter of the House if we have regard to the facts

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of the situation, and I think we all wish to have regard to the facts of the situation. At present there are so many principles in the Conference Resolutions, which depend upon details still to be worked out, agreements and understandings still to be reached and delicate but essential enactments still to be devised, that I frankly confess that only a very imprudent person would with confidence say that the Round Table Conference has produced a workable plan.

In dealing with so vast a subject an afternoon's and evening's Debate cannot produce satisfactory answers to the questions that must be asked, before any impartial person, with the very best will in the world, can give a final judgment. I would like to take a simple test. Supposing I take the Government of India Act, with which I happen to be fairly familiar because of my past connection with the India Office, I could find dozens of Sections or Sub-sections in it dealing with matters, even matters which came under my official cognisance almost every day when I was in office, which have been left unsettled or left unmentioned by the Conference. I make no complaint, I merely state the fact. If I asked the Secretary of State how he proposed to alter a particular point, or what the Conference thought and said about another point, he would clearly be unable to answer and he would not be to blame. But that being so, neither can we on this side, neither can my hon. and right hon. Friends who represented the Conservative party at the Conference be blamed if we say and if they say, "We want to see far more concrete and finished proposals before we can say that the work of a written constitution is derivable from the Conference proposals."

In such circumstances I venture to submit that my right hon. Friend the Member for Chelsea (Sir S. Hoare) is perfectly entitled to have a reasonable optimism about the scheme, if scheme it can yet be called, and my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) is equally entitled to a reasonable pessimism, from which remark it must not be deduced that I necessarily agree with what he said in his speech. But there must be wide differences of view. When we talk of a non-party attitude on the question of India I would like to say that no one worked harder, during the seven years that I, single-handed, represented the Secretary of State for India in this House, to that end than I did and if the Prime Minister will not think it impertinent of me I would like to say that I think no two people gave more help in that direction than the right hon. Gentleman, occupying as he did the very important post of Leader of the Opposition, and I in the very humble post of Under-Secretary of State for India. The mere fact that you have the attempt and more than the attempt, the successful effort, to try to have a tripartite front, so to speak, on the subject of India makes it all the more important that everyone should be clear in his own mind what is the eventual end and how that end is to be attained.

While there may be agreement as to the aim—and in justice to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping I must say that he specifically referred both to the Preamble to the Act and Section 41 which is to be construed in connection with the Preamble and said that he accepted both—there must necessarily be—and the fact of there being a tripartite agreement, perhaps makes it even more likely to happen—wide differences of opinion as to the methods to be pursued. There must be such differences of opinion even within a party. I do not want to try to throw the ball back to the party opposite but there always have been within that party differences of opinion as to methods. No one would deny it and I know it from my own experience. When we were in office we got the most practical and valuable support from hon. and right hon. Gentlemen then on the Front Opposition Bench but many of their back bench supporters though professing, I have no doubt with perfect sincerity, to hold the same views as their leaders, differed very considerably from their leaders and from us as to the methods to be pursued.

I leave that matter and say that I think it would be wrong—no one has done so in this Debate but it has been done outside—to charge the Conservative delegates to the Conference with a lack of constructiveness in the matter of the proposals at the Conference. We are not the Government responsible for bringing

forward the proposals and, as I understand it, the attitude which our representatives took up at the Conference was to make it plain that they supported an all-India Federation as the best and, indeed, the only principle to give effect to eventual self-government for India and that they were ready and willing to consider proposals to that end when those proposals had assumed a shape which rendered complete analysis and a definite judgment on that analysis possible. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping requested me to make clear in my remarks the difference which he believed to exist between the attitude taken up by the delegates representing those who sit on this side, and the delegates representing the party which sits below the Gangway. I can only give the words of the report:

"It must be clearly understood that although agreement has been reached by a majority of the sub-committee on many important matters, such agreement is only provisional, and every member followed the example of Lord Reading who said that the understanding had been from the outset that it would be open to all members, when they come to consider the complete proposals for the Federal Constitution, to modify or change any provisional assent they might have hitherto given."

The report also says:

"Over and above that, upon the basic assumption set out in paragraph 8, Lord Peel and Sir Samuel Hoare, with the information at their disposal, and with so many questions still undecided, are unconvinced that the kind of Executive envisaged in this Report can be successfully adapted to the special conditions of an all-India Federation. They, therefore, desire to see further explored methods for increasing Indian control over the Federal Government that are better suited to all-India needs than those founded upon British precedents."

The answer to the question therefore seems to be that there was some distinction, at any rate in the method of expressing the points of view, of the two delegations; otherwise, that paragraph is misleading. On that point I think my right hon. Friend was justified in saying what he did. If it be urged that I have been stressing too much the machinery of the question, I want again to emphasise the fact that the Indian constitution is a written one and that in the end this House and another place will have to translate phrases and aspirations into the words and sections of an Act of Parliament. In my own opinion, the task of the India Office, the Government draftsmen, and this House, sitting in Committee when the time comes to pass this Act, will be at least as onerous as the duties of the Conference.

I quite agree with what was said by one speaker in the Debate, that we are prone to make ourselves think that we shall be able in the next two years, whatever Government is in office, to give our attention in the main to the very vital and anxious questions that concern every side of the House in home affairs, but in my opinion the question of India is going very largely to dominate the political scene in the next two or three years. Things have been tending that way for a long time, and I hope that the great interest which has been taken to-day in this Debate is evidence of a change of view by this House towards Indian questions. There is no doubt about it that, not for a few years, but for 50 years past at least, one of the principal complaints of India—and it has been a fully justified complaint—has been that the House of Commons is nearly always empty when there are Indian Debates. It is only when a crisis arises that the House shows any interest in Indian questions. I have talked to scores of Indians on this subject—and I am sure that the opinion of hon. and right hon. Members opposite is the same—and they have all said to me, "Yes, of course, you take no interest in India because it means no votes to you. Only a few of your constituents are interested in India, and that is what we complain of."

Whether the House likes it or not, it is going to have the subject of India thrown upon its attention, whatever Government is in office, for the next year or two, and it must make up its mind to give very complete and very conclusive attention to the question of the future government of India. To that end, of course, the Conference has been a beginning, and I hope that it is a helpful beginning, but meanwhile you have to consider the situation. It will be at least two years, and I think it will be very optimistic to say two years—it cannot be less—before the new constitution can come into operation. Meanwhile, India has to be governed, and to be governed, in my opinion, not only

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with understanding, but with firm resolution, if any new constitution is to have a chance of success.

That brings me to the second question with which I wish to deal. Is the good will there to work the constitution? I am personally convinced that public opinion here will never allow Parliament to give legislative enactment to any new constitution unless there is reasonable assurance that it will not be used by sufficient persons having the power and organisation to carry out their will in order to destroy the ties that bind India to the British Empire. I think we have to draw a very sharp distinction between the persons represented among the Indians at the Conference and the Congress. Let me say that I accept completely what I believe is the sincerity of the British Indian delegates to the Conference in wishing to attain self-government for India within the Empire, but that is not the policy of Congress. The policy of Congress has been for a long time past an independent India, and in some instances—for example, Mr. Gandhi—an India as far removed from any conception of modern western civilisation as possible, an India in which spinning by hand is the main industry and hospitals and railways disagreeable things to be relegated to the background. I am not for a moment attacking Mr. Gandhi, and I am only saying that that is his view, otherwise their words and acts over a long series of years are meaningless.

We are told that the proposals of the Conference, plus an amnesty, will alter all this. It may be so, but past experience is not encouraging. There was an amnesty in Mr. Montagu's time, in 1919, and there was a quotation in the newspapers this morning from the "Moral and Material Progress Report," an official volume issued each year by the Government of India, of the time, showing that the results which were expected from that amnesty from that gaol delivery, were not in the least fulfilled. In fact, it was followed by the most intensive period of agitation that India had yet seen and by the commencement of the non-co-operation movement, and without saying anything to throw cold water on the enthusiasm which has been shown this afternoon, I want to point out that two Viceroys, several Secretarys of State, and three or four British Governments have alike failed to come to any terms with Mr. Gandhi.

Mr. HOLFORD KNIGHT: Did not Amritsar intervene?

Earl WINTERTON: This is not the occasion to discuss the main motives——

Mr. KNIGHT: I understand that the Noble Lord has been giving an account of the circumstances in which this element of reconcilation has failed, and I am asking him whether a material factor in that situation was not Amritsar.

Earl WINTERTON: I am talking of long after Amritsar. Amritsar had nothing to do with the failure of the Labour Government to come to any terms with Mr. Gandhi in 1924.

Mr. KNIGHT: The Noble Lord was talking of 1919.

Earl WINTERTON: I am talking of a much later date, and Amritsar had nothing to do with the failure of the Conservative Government and with the failure of the two Viceroys, Lord Reading and Lord Irwin, to come to terms with Mr. Gandhi since 1924. Amritsar had nothing to do with the failure of the present Viceroy to come to terms with Mr. Gandhi in 1929-30. I have not the time to discuss—I wish we could have a two days' Debate on this most important subject—what is, in my opinion, at the basis of the Congress movement, but I would only say in very general terms that I think it is partly nationalistic and idealistic and partly economic. The Nationalistic movement may be likened to similar tendencies in Eastern and Western Europe, and, like them, was largely started by the Peace Conference; and the late President Wilson, the late Monsieur Clemenceau, and the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) were the unconscious parents of the greatest wave of Chauvinistic nationalism that the world has ever known.

The attitude of that type of supporter of the Congress is shortly this: He says: "We are as good as you, and we mean to run our own show. A fig for tradition and for alien loyalties and alien rights. There is no such thing as the latter. No country has rights in another country."

That, broadly, is the attitude taken up by certain of the smaller Balkan States, and I think it is a possible cause of external complications and even worse. As regards the economic cause, there is no doubt that a large source of the income of Congress to-day is derived from merchants manufacturers and traders, who think it will help them to get the British out of India. That is the main source of the Congress income, and there are others who subscribe money to it. That money has come very largely from trading and merchanting, because they think we are leaving India and that it is best to propitiate in advance the new rulers. What the Government and what the Government of India have to do is to convince these people that their view is wrong, and to bring them round to the conception held by the delegates to the Conference of an India within the Empire.

It is no use anyone saying you are giving these people what they want. You are not doing it by these proposals or by any proposals like them. What the Congress has asked for again and again, quite clearly and definitely, is an independent India. Therefore, it is no use your saying that you are giving them what they want. If you want to come to terms with them, you must persuade them that they are wrong. That, to my mind, is the main task of the Government of India to-day. Whether the action which they have taken in the last 48 hours will be helpful to that end, I am not in a position to say, and I do not wish to criticise it. It may be that it will be successful, but if anyone thinks that by merely fine words and talking of good will—certainly you have the good will of the delegates at the Conference; certainly that has done good, and everyone at the Conference is entitled to take credit as an individual for the contribution he made towards that—you have not got to the main root of the problem, namely, of converting Congress. It becomes more and more like the Sinn Fein in Ireland, and we cannot tell what will happen in the next few months or the next year or so. Until you can either destroy the power which Congress has, or make it cease to be popular, you will never get these proposals, or anything like them, accepted in India. That is the main issue, and no one can ignore the difficulties of the situation. On the other hand, no one should be too pessimistic as to the chances of arriving at some settlement within the next few months.

Dr. MARION PHILLIPS: I cannot speak to-night as an authority on India, as an expert, as anyone who has been responsible for helping the Government, or as a member of any of the many Commissions and conferences that have taken place with a view to finding some way of meeting the Indian problem, to the satisfaction of India and the acceptance of Britain. But I can at least say a word of congratulation to the members of the Round Table Conference, and especially to convey the congratulations of the women of this country on the magnificent work done at the Conference by the Indian women delegates. I think that the eminence of those Indian women, the views expressed by them and the ability with which they expressed them, and the generous and tolerant point of view they showed, have raised all through the world the hopes of women who care for the development of women's organisations in public life.

In India a little while ago there was no women's movement, and within a few years the women of India have advanced to a position of real importance in the public life of their nation. While I agree that the attitude adopted towards the Depressed Classes will show clearly the capacity and success of India in dealing with her problems, I also say that the attitude which the women of India will take and the work which they will do, I hope, in future to save the lives of women and children in that country, will be the greatest test of Indian government in the future. It is true that the condition of millions of Indian people to-day is so miserable that it moves the hearts of those who have studied it, but amongst those people no section needs more care and attention than the women and children, and the fact that in India to-day there has already arisen a body of women who will sacrifice anything, even life and freedom, to gain for India the position in which they think they can do more for her people, is one of the greatest hopes we have for the future.

As I listened to some of the speeches to-day in which the difficulties of establishing a constitution have been set forth, I wondered again and whether those who

[Dr. Phillips.]

have spoken about the difficulties, no matter with how much knowledge and ability, have realised the harm they do to India by stressing the difficulties, instead of seeking to find a way to overcome them. What we are here for, I take it, is to try to find for India a peaceful and happy development of her constitutional advance. We are not going to find it if we talk about the process which we have only just begun as being a process which will take years and years to accomplish. When I listened to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) and he told us how, though Dominion status was promised for India, it was promised as something far off, and as I heard him afterwards deal with the results of giving greater powers of self government to the Provinces, and heard him say that those results had meant in every case that the Services handed over were worse administered than before, I did not wonder that there was unrest in India, and that when the Labour Government came into office they found a situation there which forced them into the difficult position of having to deal with a revolutionary or, rather, lawless movement. It is no wonder that the Indian people have mistrusted past British Governments.

One of the great things done by the Round Table Conference is that it has restored, in a great part, Indian public confidence that that declaration of Dominion status was really meant by the Government at least by the Government at present in office in this country. I do not think we need wonder at past mistrust when we hear every difficulty emphasised, and every great gain that has been made by the Conference belittled. It will not help to get agreement in India or to win over at least some section of Congress opinion if the Congress are told in advance that what we have got to do is to convince them that they are wrong. I think we have all learned with very great pleasure of the release of Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders, and we are looking forward to that being the prelude to the release of other political prisoners as discussions continue and negotiations develop. In my opinion, it is our business in this House to help forward the gains already made, to emphasise the points of agreement, and to use our imagination as well as our brains, and our hearts as well, to develop into a real successful Constitution that small and feeble plant already set in the ground.

There are good Governments, good constitutions, bad constitutions and workable constitutions, and the workable constitution lies between the good and the bad. We have to find a workable contribution for India, but we cannot find it unless we have the friendly and trustful co-operation of the Indians themselves. Any Constitution imposed by this Parliament on India would necessarily fail to be a workable constitution. I believe that if we will make full use of the sympathy engendered by the Round Table Conference, we have an opportunity of drawing to our side the great bulk of vocal public opinion in India to-day. We want sympathetic imagination and hard-working brains to solve the problem, but I hope that feeling the necessity of keeping our heads cool will not lead us to freeze the action of our imagination and our hearts. That, I think, is the danger that lies before us when we look back over many of the speeches since the opening addresses to-day, and we see how every possible difficulty has been enhanced by an atmosphere of discouragement, especially from those whom we may call the extremists on both sides, such as the right hon. Member for Epping, and from some hon. Gentlemen on this side. If the extremists will help and will try to find the basis of co-operation they will do far more good than by talking about the length of time before Dominion status can be achieved. I hope that the Government will go forward rapidly, that they will not pursue the policy of gradualness, but that they will aim at as rapid and quick a progress as is possible in the work of meeting the Indians themselves, and of developing the germs of the constitution which they have now settled at this great Conference.

Mr. STANLEY: It is not very easy, in the course of what must necessarily be a short speech, to range over the whole of the immense topics which are opened out by the Debate. I should like to refer to the speech which has been made from the Bench below me, by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill). The right hon. Gentleman

belongs to what one may call the "Stop this nonsense" school. He admits the existence of the preambles, the pledges and the promises that have been made that India should progress by steps to self-government, but he says—and I think quite fairly—that either implicitly or explicitly in those pledges was the assumption that India should fit herself for this advance. He takes up the line that she has not during the past few years shown herself to be so fitted, and that therefore an end must be made to this progressive realisation of self-government on her part. He went on to say that India was entitled to demand that he and those who thought like him should speak with candour, and should define accurately where this progress was to stop. Unfortunately, either through lack of time or for some other reason, he did not proceed in fact to define where it was to stop.

That is one of the greatest difficulties that the right hon. Gentleman's school of thought has to face. If we are to put a stop to the progress of India towards self-government, where is that stop to be put? Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to put it where the Statutory Commission proposes, that is to say, in an India where full provincial self-government has been handed over to the Indians, and where they are made responsible for law and order? Although it is true that there is responsibility in the centre, they have the legislatures so composed that they are able, if so disposed, almost completely to handicap the work of government. If we are not going to stop where the Statutory Commission proposes, are we going to stop where we are to-day, where, in the provincial legislatures, at least half the portfolios are held by Ministers responsible to the legislature, where Indianisation has proceeded rapidly, and where there is in existence an elected legislature at the centre capable at least of great impediment?

Are we going to stop where the Morley-Minto reforms left it? If we adopt the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman, we cannot stop at any of these stages, because in their varying degrees they were built up on the one idea that we should try to associate Indians in the work of governing India. We are soliciting their co-operation and inviting their good will, and what co-operation, what good will and what assistance by Indians in the task of governing India could be expected if the right hon. Gentleman's policy became the declared policy of this country? The right hon. Gentleman, with that facility of phrase which has so often delighted us in this House, spoke quite truly of the lack of both wisdom and profit in giving catsmeat to a tiger. I agree with him entirely, but I should feel no greater sense of security, and no greater expectation of profit, by approaching a tiger with a flag in my hand and a peroration on my lips. If there is a tiger, and I have to face it, I should find security in nothing except the most modern and expensive lethal weapon.

So we are brought back to consider whether the right hon. Gentleman's analysis is right. Are those people who are to-day connected with the Nationalist movement in India, are those thousands to whom he referred, who suffered imprisonment for their beliefs, are the 80 odd ladies and gentlemen of different walks of life and different economic position, who came here and in the past 10 weeks have asked for an extension of self-government, are they all to be classed together as people implacable in their hatred, impervious to reason, and intent only on destruction? If the right hon. Gentleman's analysis were right, that is the sole motive thought behind the Nationalist movement, and that kind of movement is not going to be put down by a few flamboyant speeches. These people are not going to be cowed by armchair critics, however courageous. We can say to our heart's content, "Shall England lose India?" and every will say "No." One hundred and fifty years ago, I have no doubt, the same sort of people were saying, "Shall England lose America?", and everybody said "No," but we did.

The right hon. Gentleman must carry his analysis and his policy to its logical conclusion, and he must warn the people of this country that if that policy be adopted, if it be a right one, they have to be prepared to carry it to the logical end. It may be that wisdom, good will and conciliation will fail and that force, disruption, disorder and hatred will prevail, and that the terrible day will come when England will have no alternative but to surrender her obligations or to fight for them. Of this I am certain,

[Mr. Stanley.]
that the people of this country would never forgive it, and history would never defend it, if we were lightly to turn our backs on the chance, when we have on the one hand cowardly and calamitous surrender, and on the other hand hideous and devastating war—the chance of finding a middle path. It was in that spirit that the delegation from all sides went to this Conference, not pre-decided to affirm, not concerned solely to deny, but anxious only to find some settlement which would bring peace to India, and would preserve the obligations, the duties and the responsibilities of this country.

I want, in referring to the actual work of the Conference, to answer what was perhaps an unintentional, but unfair criticism, which was launched at us by the right hon. Gentleman. He inferred that we on these benches and on the Liberal benches, who had every reason to be grateful for the magnificent work which had been done by the Statutory Commission, showed our gratitude by immediately jettisoning their report as soon as we appeared at the Conference.

Mr. CHURCHILL: Oh no, that had nothing to do with the delegation to the Conference. That was done by His Majesty's Government long before.

Mr. STANLEY: If I have to defend neither myself nor the Liberals, let me put myself in the almost unique position of trying to defend His Majesty's Government. The members of the Statutory Commission, although in brief and in abstract they touched upon the possibility of a Federation of all India, for very good reasons did not consider it as an immediate possibility and did not deal with it in any detail. What, then, were we to do? We had the Princes of India starting the Conference by saying "We want an all-India Federation and we want to come in." Were we then to turn up the volume of the Statutory Commission and to say, "I am afraid it does not say anything about it in here, and so we cannot discuss it"? [*Interruption.*] Yes, but the reference was to a more remote time. It was laid down quite clearly that it was an ideal future for India; but it cannot be pretended that the Statutory Commission really dealt with the machinery of government under a federal constitution, that it dealt with the points which have to be discussed here, with the subjects which were to be divided between the centre and the provinces. I am not concerned in attacking the Statutory Commission, but trying to excuse ourselves of any neglect of their valuable work.

I do not pretend that skilled dialecticians cannot make a great deal of fun out of the documents we have in our hands to-day. If they like to shoot their pheasants sitting it will provide them with the sport they like. If you choose to treat as a constitution, as a draft about to be presented to Parliament, a document which pretends to be no more than an expression of the opinions of people gathered round a table, it does not require a great deal of oratorical skill to get your amusement; but the Conference set out to do one thing, and that I think it succeeded in doing. It did not draft a constitution, nor reach hard and fast resolutions and agreements, but it succeeded in showing the possibilities of a scheme from which one at least of the two parties did not immediately recoil, showing a road along which the two parties could at least set out together, even if the difficulties hereafter proved insuperable. I think I speak for the whole Conservative delegation when I say that we were prepared to test any scheme which was proposed by these three tests: (1) Will it work? Is it more than a mere paper document which cannot be translated into effective action in the peculiar circumstances of India? (2) Will it provide adequate safeguards; that is to say, adequate opportunities for this country to carry out the obligations of which it is unable and unwilling to divest itself? Finally, will it so satisfy the aspirations of India as to secure, not the agreement of everybody, not the consent of the irreconciliables, but a sufficient amount of agreement to enable you to believe that the constitution will be carried on with good will and with a possibility of success.

It is not possible at this hour to show how far those tests were satisfied, or how far they could be satisfied. With regard to the question of whether this constitution will work, I do not for a moment deny that a hundred-and-one important questions are merely touched upon and not decided. We on these benches are perfectly entitled to reserve any decision

we have to make until we see these hundred-and-one points resolved, and know whether they are resolved in accordance with what we regard as the possibility of working them. I will say this, that when the right hon. Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon) took this particular test and said, "Now, let me see whether these things will work?" he appeared to me to have mixed up the question, "Will it work?" with "Did you get agreement upon it?" I expected him to produce some problem we had overlooked, some question which it was impossible to answer and which had brought crashing down the possibility of ever erecting a working constitution on this basis. All he asked were questions such as these, "What proportions were the Princes to have in the Legislature?" "Were there to be Indian States represented on the executive?" and "Were the Provinces and States to be represented on the basis of population or some other method?" All those questions are capable of being answered. If you get the good will and the common sense which, after all, are fundamental to this scheme, they can be solved. They do not present any insuperable obstacle to the working out of the scheme.

Let me say one word with regard to the safeguards. At this Conference we never did propose the safeguards as a mere niggling method of taking back with one hand what you pretend to give with the other. If that had been our view, we would very much rather have been candid and sincere about it and said, "We will not give at all." But we do believe that this country has certain obligations to carry out which it is determined not to evade. By common consent it has been left with the obligation of the defence of India. Defence means a great deal more than having an army in a box, taking it out when you want it, and putting it back when you have finished. You have got to feed your Army, move your Army, communicate with your Army, and any constitution to be acceptable must give us a real power of being responsible for the defence we have undertaken. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, speaking the other day, mentioned the difficulties and dangers of power without responsibility. There are some things even worse than that, and one is responsibility without power. It would be better for this country to clear out of India altogether than to pretend to the world and to the people of India to be undertaking a responsibility which we are not in a condition to carry out.

The right hon. Gentleman dealt with the question of the financial safeguards. We have obligations to investors in this country who invested under the authority of the Secretary of State which we are bound in honour to carry out. For the sake of the people of India we have an obligation to defend their credits; to see that their country, which has increasingly to depend for any greater prosperity on large developments financed almost entirely from abroad, does not create financial conditions such as would make those loans impossible. There are other safeguards which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Chelsea (Sir S. Hoare) has dealt with, and I want to say only this one thing with regard to them. If we are to be met in India with a mere attempt to whittle these things down, to bargain them away, to snatch a little bit off there and a little bit off here, then any real agreement is impossible. If they are prepared to recognise the meaning of safeguards, what we want them for and what their uses are, I believe that agreement on that point, too, can be reached.

Finally, with regard to the possibility of a sufficient measure of agreement from the people of India to make a scheme of this kind work. However you may hedge it round it all comes back in the end to the question of responsibility at the centre. It is undoubtedly the fact that we are using responsibility with a strictly technical meaning. We have a meaning which used to obtain in the House of Commons under which when a Government was defeated it went out although that is not so strictly adhered to now. Whether this is simply an extension of Indian control over Indian affairs I am not concerned at the moment to answer, but that there is attached the idea of responsibility at the centre is undoubtedly important. If the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping came into the House 30 years ago knowing that he was condemned for the rest of his Parliamentary life to Parliamentary opposition, and knowing that however sound his arguments and however firm his principles he would never leave these benches

[Mr. Stanley.]

to sit on the other side, I think the right hon Gentleman would have a grievance. If the Government were not only irresponsible but irremovable, hon. Members would have a grievance.

What happened? Sooner or later you are bound to be met with this question. If all the details of your machinery are worked out as you want them, if all the safeguards of which you can think are granted, are you then prepared to grant a measure of responsibility at the centre? if not, the whole of your scheme of Federation falls to the ground. The Indian States have inherited the idea of responsibility at the centre. If you carry out this principle, you send into the ranks of the Opposition the whole of the political feelings in the country, and you arouse very great doubt as to the pledges made in the past as to the amount of political progress which has been secured in India. Are we prepared to take those risks? If our safeguards are effective, are we prepared to say that even then we shall not be prepared for any advance in Indian control at the centre?

The Conservative party have always been realists in politics. This old country has demonstrated in the past that nations and societies are built up on organisations as they grow, but they never stand still, and they know that the good fit of one day becomes a strait waistcoat of the next. If we had abandoned all that Empire meant you might say that those responsible for the gift of self-government to South Africa were lunatics, and that those responsible for giving self-government to Ireland were traitors. You could have pointed out that all those things have been done and yet the centre of the Empire itself has survived. We have very often in the past built constitutions, not on rock, but on shifting sand instead of upon the good will, co-operation and common sense of the people. To-day, we have to make it clear that there are certain fundamentals by which we stand and from which we are not to be frightened by threats. No weariness or fatigue will force us to abandon those fundamentals, but we do think that if those conditions are granted then we should take perhaps this last opportunity of bringing to a troubled land peace of another sort.

Mr. STANLEY BALDWIN: That I rise to take part in this Debate for a very short space of time is due entirely to one of those fundamental differences between India and England which have been referred to to-day. It is not uncommon in India that statesmen and politicians and leaders of the people impose upon themselves a day of silence, and, had it not been for the speech made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill), I should not have intervened. I feel that there are a few words which it is incumbent upon me to say. I never like disagreeing with a colleague, and especially with one who has sat close to my side in difficult times, and who scattered over England the "British Gazette" at a time when its due delivery was more important in the history of the State than anything that could have occurred.

10.0 p.m.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping said quite fairly when he began his speech—a speech graced, as all his speeches are, with a wealth of rhetoric and felicitous phrases—that he was not representing my views or the views of the Conservative party. I think it is only fair to say both to the right hon. Gentleman and to the House that I recognise in every word that the right hon. Gentleman said that he spoke from his own convictions. I have no question about that. The right hon. Gentleman put before the Houe a point of view held by many people in this country, and this helps to make the whole problem difficult for solution in this country, just as many of the wild views which are held in certain quarters in India make it difficult to find a solution in India.

My hon. Friend the Member for Westmorland (Mr. Stanley) made a most interesting speech which represents very fairly the views of the younger Members of the Conservative party. My hon. Friend made an allusion to the loss of the American Colonies which I thought was not wholly inapt, because that event passed through my mind, and I felt that if George III had been endowed with the tongue of Edmund Burke for only an hour he might have delivered such a speech.

My right hon. Friend asked a question, and a very pertinent question. He said,

"Why is it that the whole scene has changed, and changed so swiftly, and that we are discussing things to-day that we should have thought impossible of even consideration only a few weeks or months ago?" I think the answer to that question has been found in some of the speeches that have been delivered this afternoon, and among them I would mention the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon). The whole situation has altered, because, contrary to our expectation, and contrary to the expectation of the members of the Parliamentary Commission, the whole light has been thrown on the possible creation of a federal system for all India. I submit that the imagination of the whole country has been caught by the idea of a United States of India, and, therefore, we are on entirely fresh territory—territory which had been contemplated by the Parliamentary Commission, but to which they had not devoted the greatest amount of their time, because they had felt that the conditions which could bring it into existence were as yet remote. The whole situation has been changed by the attitude of the Princes of India, and I think we must recognise that fact.

I would say this, that when my right hon. Friend spoke about the Conservative delegation having extricated themselves with great skill, he conveyed what he surely did not mean to convey to the House, namely, a rather false impression as to the position of the delegation. I wish to pay my tribute here, as Leader of the party, to the work done by Lord Peel, Lord Zetland, my right hon. Friend the Member for Chelsea (Sir S. Hoare), and my hon. Friend the Member for Westmorland (Mr. Stanley). They went into that Conference with the single idea of doing all in their power to be helpful, to try to help to get something done, and there is no question of extrication. It is true in a way, as my right hon. Friend said, that they have a free hand in the future, but a free hand limited in this way. The position is quite clear to me, and I would point this out to the whole of my party. I must put this question. We are His Majesty's Opposition, and, if it should happen that we should change places with right hon. Gentlemen opposite, what do hon. Members behind me suppose that our duty would be? We have only one duty, and that one duty is to try to implement so far as we can what has been done in the Conference. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear hear"] I quite agree with what was said by my right hon. Friend and by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley. Very little indeed had been agreed to by the Conference; but none the less the striking fact is the agreement in principle that we should work for a federal system. That is what I mean by implementing the work of the Conference. I should consider it to be my duty, so far as I was able if I were leading the party still, to use every effort in my power to bring about that federal constitution. When I say that, I recognise as fully as the right hon. Gentleman and my right hon. Friend, and more fully, probably, than many Members on the back benches opposite, the difficulties. They are, I know, stupendous. But I would face those difficulties with courage, and in the hope and belief that neither British nor Indian statesmanship is yet bankrupt. I do not believe that you are going to get any permanent solution of the question of Indian government until you get a complete co-operation and understanding and good will between Indians and ourselves.

Many of my friends—I do not know about the number, but certain of my friends—will have sympathised with a great many things that my right hon. Friend said, and to them I should like to put this point, for, after all, they are all part of a party who will be responsible at some time for carrying on His Majesty's Government—that is what happens to an Opposition—and they will have to answer these questions. We often hear it said in this country, and the words have a familiar smack about them, that what is wanted is a period of either firm or strong government. It is very difficult to define what is meant by that, but, assuming for a moment that we are in agreement as to what it means, I would say this. That is perfectly possible, but you can only hope to succeed on that policy alone on two assumptions; I am coming to the history in a moment. Those two assumptions are, first, unanimity among the political parties at home, and, secondly, continuity of policy. It was because both these preliminary

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necessities were absent in the case of Ireland that the Irish question went on, as it did, for a generation, and culminated, as it did, between the alternatives of complete surrender or war. Opinions differ as to the solution that was chosen. I, as a member of the Government at the time, supported the solution of surrender. I did not like it at the time, but I did it from conviction. I do not want to say anything about it to-night, but to none of us was it an extraordinarily happy choice. It was, however, the only choice. I merely point it out as an instance from history to which I think it is well that all Members should give consideration before the responsibility rests upon them for the direction of the gravest and most difficult policy which faces us in this Empire to-day

I would make one more observation. I do not know whether all my party will agree, but I am profoundly convinced that, unless there is a general agreement on principle—not on details, but on principle between the parties in this country, unless as much agreement continues as has existed since the setting up of the Parliamentary Commission, the government of India from London by one single party would be impossible. Believing that, as I do, no endeavour would be spared on my part, as none has been spared for 18 months past, to keep, as far as possible, the parties in line in principle. It may mean, to those on the benches opposite, not going quite as far as they may like; it may mean, to us on these benches, going a little further than we should like; but let that unanimity be broken up, and no man in this House as Prime Minister or Secretary of State for India has any chance of coming with the government of that country.

One other observation, and I have finished. The difficulties are enormous, and perhaps there is no greater difficulty in India, among many difficulties that are great, than the difficulty of adjudicating fairly and rightly between the different races and creeds, and principally between the Hindus and Mahommedans. That was the spot, just as the party differences in England formed the spot, where all those who wish ill to agreement in either country will concentrate their efforts. If anyone wishes to prevent any chance of agreement or settlement as we proceed, let him devote himself in this country to breaking down the Parliamentary unity, let him devote himself in India to making it impossible for agreement to take place. We have to watch those two spots. The task of those who have to go forward and progress in agreement, with dissonance and enemies on either hand, is no easy one. We may take comfort to ourselves, in the famous phrase which was told me to-night used by Lord Minto, that no man is so strong as he who is not afraid to be called weak. There is no doubt that those who use their best endeavours to get a settlement will be at some stage or another called weak, and there are few men probably who enjoy that.

I do not for a moment underrate or minimise the difficulties, but they are difficulties which have to be faced now by the Prime Minister, and will have in time to be faced by Members on this side, possibly by the Prime Minister again, because these differences and difficulties will go on for many years. Even if a constitution is evolved and got to work, two, three or four years will not be the last word. We have set out on by far the most difficult task we have ever undertaken. I was looking at a speech I made 14 months ago, and I am glad to think there is not a single word in it which I would alter to-night. I certainly intend, if I am ever called again to bear that responsibility, subject to what has been said by my right hon. Friend who spoke for his delegation in that matter of safeguards, to do all I can to ensure that co-operation and that working together in equal partnership, to carry out the undertakings given again and again by Governments of this country, with the Indian people and ourselves.

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. Wedgwood Benn): I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) will allow me to commiserate with him. I listened with the very greatest interest to his speech and made very copious notes for the purpose of a technical reply to him, but such a painful unanimity has broken out in the House of Commons this evening that I feel it would be idle on my part to attempt any reply. It all seems to me, to use his own phrase, to be in the cabin of the ship of his own

opinions where, listening to the jazz music of his own oratory, he is sinking in a calm sea of universal popular disapproval. It is not a job to which anyone who enjoys the contests in this House, as I do, can look forward, to be explaining what has been explained and, so to speak, to be constantly pushing at an open door, but perhaps the House would indulge me if, in an objective way, I tried to explain why it is that the views expressed by the right hon. Gentleman to-night, and by others at other times, are impossible for persons who view the situation as it actually is to-day.

The central feature of the right hon. Gentleman's speech was this. He rejects the notion that responsibility at the centre can be a part of the new Indian Constitution. I should like to put to him or to anyone—he understands that I do not confine myself to that particular point—the following objections to that to which I have not been able to find any answer. The first objection is this, that to deny the principle of centre responsibility in Indian Government is to fly flat in the face of all the pledges which have been given, not only by members of all parties but by representatives of the Crown on behalf of the British Government. The right hon. Gentleman, when he made the famous speech about the cats' meat, did not really tell us that the speech about the cats' meat was intended merely to be his own paraphrase of the Montagu Declaration. These pledges stand, and they must be accepted or rejected. [*Interruption.*] The cats' meat and the tiger! These pledges stand, and they bind this Government and all future Governments, and unless you keep the principle of responsibility in the central Government of India, you cannot say you are keeping those pledges either in the spirit or the letter.

It is very often said that because pledges have foolishly been given in the past, we have got into a position, and cannot help but go forward. I do not think that that really represents the view of men in the past history of England. You can go back 100 years—men like Munro, Elphinstone and Hastings—and you will find that whatever the body of popular opinion may have been, these farsighted statesmen dealing with relations between England and India did foresee and shape established policy towards the day when India would assume responsibility for her own Government. This appeal is based both upon a political and a moral reason. The political reason is this: Somebody has to be responsible to the Government of India.

Mr. GEORGE BALFOUR: Hear, hear!

Mr. BENN: The hon. Gentleman says "Hear, hear," and I assume he means that we are going to be responsible for the Government of India.

Mr. BALFOUR: For a long time to come.

Mr. BENN: Yes, for a long time to come. Let me ask the hon. Gentleman whether he is prepared himself to bear real responsibility for the Government of India—this large continent of 320,000,000 people and nine provinces? Does the hon. Gentleman, capable and able as he is, sitting in his place here and having all the responsibility of his constituents in Hampstead as well, really say that he can take on this responsibility?

Mr. BALFOUR: I say this most deliberately. I decline to deny the responsibility of this country to India until we are certain that a better constitution will be set up.

Mr. BENN: And we are engaged, with the assistance of men of all parties, in setting up such a constitution. I did not really intend to indulge in controversy. I did not think anybody would deny the practical truth of what I am saying.

Mr. BALFOUR: It is a matter of time.

Mr. BENN: It has been my experience in the few months that I have been in office, that problems come up, a problem of railway policy, a piece of commercial policy, a question of the action of the police, a question of social policy—how can I even know the facts, let alone bring the responsibility home to Members of this House? The task is practically impossible. Therefore, unless you are going to hand the task over to highly qualified but irresponsible bureaucracy, you

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have to find shoulders upon which, as an important practical necessity, you can lay the task. The task in which we are engaged is that of trying to find shoulders upon which that burden can be laid. People sometimes talk about conferring responsibilities. I would rather say, imposing responsibilities. We want someone to carry the burden, and to carry it with local knowledge and sober judgment.

Mr. BALFOUR: And shirk our own.

Mr. BENN: This has a bearing upon the question of safeguards. I would repeat what was mentioned by the Prime Minister as to safeguards. If we believe that it is only by the conferment of duties that you can evoke strength and experience, and if we desire to find someone that will bear the burden of which I am speaking, then it is obvious that the safeguards must be so framed as not to undermine the responsibility of Ministers in the provinces, and not to enable them to take shelter behind the reserve powers of the Governor. That is to say, the powers of the Minister must wax and the reserve emergency powers of the Governors must be kept in the background and wane. We desire to lend a helping hand. There is a difference between a helping hand and a surgical boot. One strengthens, while the other atrophies the limb.

The second practical reason why we are compelled to give self-government to India is this, that no Government can survive unless it has the support of public opinion. All the struggle in India in the last years has not been a physical struggle at all. It has never been a question of force and power. We have had power in plenty. We have had police forces and armies. The struggle in India has been a struggle for the support of Indian opinion.

Mr. CHURCHILL: British will power.

HON. MEMBERS: Have the Indians no will?

Mr. BENN: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will permit me to put the case. I assert that no Government can be strong unless it has moral support. Force, so far from being of increasing assistance, is a diminishing asset; the more it is applied without the support of public opinion the weaker it becomes in its effect. The real struggle has been a struggle for the support of Indian opinion, and it is because the masses of Indian opinion continue to believe in the good will of our policy, that we have so far succeeded. The reason why Lord Irwin has been able to maintain his position of power, to the infinite benefit of the Empire, in India to-day, despite the fact that he has been compelled by circumstances, as the right hon. Gentleman truly said, to pass nine ordinances, is that the people of India believe that he intends to discharge the obligations which we have promised to discharge towards them.

When the Congress attack us and impune our good faith and say, "You are not here for the good of India but to impose British will power upon us," they get an ally, as they often get an ally, in the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping and his friends, whose speeches do more to undermine the true strength of government in India than anything else. The cause of trust and understanding has triumphed in the Round Table Conference. That is the great triumph of the Round Table Conference. It has done something to restore trust and confidence between the peoples of the two countries. There is one possible answer that the right hon. Gentleman may make, an answer that has occurred to me. It is what I may call the argument from the mute millions. That is to say, that all this agitation and this demand comes from a handful of people who are usually described with some disrespect, even by colleagues of mine, as a handful of lawyers. How far is that true? It may have been true 50 years ago. I am perfectly certain that the paternal relations between the district officers and the people were relations of contentment, respect and gratitude, but is it true to-day as a practical fact that this movement can be neglected and that it is not growing? Will the right hon. Gentleman remember that at the end of the War thousands of Indian soldiers, who had come forward to fight in our cause, who remain in gaols to-day, and who made notable sacrifices at that time for the cause of Empire, have gone back to their villages and have told the people there: "We went to Europe to fight, to engage in a great war, and were victorious, in order that people could settle their own

destinies"? Those missionaries have probably some influence among their own people.

Nobody who reads the news from India will deny that the young people of both sexes are supporting the Indian national movement; the mothers of the citizens of to-morrow, and themselves citizens, are supporting the movement, and any person who expresses contempt for the opinion of the youth of the nation does not show much foresight as a statesman. Again, many of the leaders of this movemement —I am not speaking about the Civil Disobedience movement necessarily—those people who haxe expressed sympathy and support for the Indian national aspirations number among them many distinguished men. Many distinguished men are in gaol to-day, some of whom have been singled out by the Governor of their province and rewarded for their social services. These men consider it their duty to champion the national cause to-day. Another remarkable symptom of the situation is that the Indian commercial classes are behind not only the national movement but in many cases behind the movement called Civil Disobedience.

Earl WINTERTON: When the right hon. Member talks of the national movement is he referring to the Congress Movement or the Nationalist Party, or to what movement?

Mr. BENN: I am referring to that body of opinion in India which desires to see satisfied the national aspirations of self government; the Declaration of 1st November of last year. What I desire to do is to examine the argument that in point of fact this movement has no substance and that the mute millions are on the side of the right hon. Member for Epping. I have taken the case of the youth of India, I have taken the case of the leaders of this movement, and I have given one of the most remarkable of the cases, the commercial classes. It is no good blinking these facts. I get telegrams every day bringing home to my mind the tremendous difficulties of the position and it is my duty, as the hon. Member for Hampstead wants to bear his share of the responsibility for governing India, to inform him and the House so that he may frame his opinion and exercise his judgment. It is a remarkable thing that the people who have money to lose in the great commercial enterprises in India should be backing this movement. The most significant thing of all is the part which the women of India are playing in the national movement. It is natural, after centuries of seclusion, that they should be averse from taking part in public life but they have found themselves driven by the strength of their convictions to do what is to them very distasteful—namely, to engage in this movement and, in some cases, to come into contact with the forces of public order. Some of them I regret to say are in prison at present.

In addition there has been a most remarkable change in the opinion of the European communities in India. If hon. Members will read the "Times of India," which is friendly to Indian views, and "The Statesman" they will find there I do not say a unanimity but a most remarkable confirmation of the view I am expressing—namely, that this movement cannot be regarded as something that only exists in the minds of a few but is in fact a great national movement penetrating into every rank of society and every part of the country. The right hon. Member for Epping gave us the views of several distinguished ex-Indian civil servants. Are their views up to date? They were in India 15, 10, five, perhaps one year ago; do they know the state of India to-day? The delegates at the Round Table Conference have said repeatedly "I have been away from India for 10 weeks, I really do not know what is going on."

Mr. CHURCHILL: Really, are His Majesty's Government changing their opinions on these fundamental issues with that rapidity?

Mr. BENN: His Majesty's Government are attempting to inform themselves of the facts in order that a policy may be framed suitable to the facts of the case. If the right hon. Gentleman thinks that a fundamental fact in politics was established 10, 20 or 50 years ago, he is making a mistake. You must find out the facts as they are to-day. I say that not only did these people from India who were at the Conference say that India was marching forward, as that reckless Elizabethan man of courage, Mohammed Ali, said in his last speech, with seven league boots, but they said it was moving

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so fast that even the absence of three months from India did not enable them to speak with knowledge of the present situation in India. If the right hon. Gentleman argues that in fact the views, the sympathies of the Indian national cause are only shared by a handful of people, I ask has he consulted any persons and is his case founded on that?

Mr. CHURCHILL: No, my case is founded, among other things, upon the proportion of the Indian political classes to the vast masses of the Indian population. That does not preclude the fact that the Indian political classes are numerous.

Mr. BENN: If the right hon. Gentleman discards the evidence, has he consulted any one of the 80 or 90 distinguished Indians who came to the Round Table Conference? There is no one, Prince or representative of the Depressed Classes, who will not tell him that this movement is vast and spreading, and, not only that, but that they all share sympathy with it. What is the right hon. Gentleman's solution to this? "Strong government." What does he mean by strong government? [HON. MEMBERS: "Sydney Street."] He does not mean government which seeks the support of popular opinion. That is what our plan is. He means government by force.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I suggest that after due deliberation the House should proceed, upon the lines indicated in the report of our Statutory Commission, to develop effective and real organisms of local and provincial government in the provinces, and that that is the immediate step to take, before you get carried away week by week into these new decisions.

Mr. BENN: The right hon. Gentleman has evaded my question. I have listened with very great patience. Even at the expense of physical effort the right hon. Gentleman will give us a certain amount of toleration. The right hon. Gentleman talks about evolving organisms. What is to be the strength of the organisms? On what will they rely for strength? Indian opinion? The right hon. Gentleman will not answer that question.

Mr. CHURCHILL: Partly British decisions, and Indian loyalty and good will.

Mr. BENN: British decisions and Indian loyalty and good will. What does that mean? The lathi, the stick, and after the lathi the rifle, and after the rifle the machine gun. You must either base government on the assent of the people or govern by force. The logical consequence of the right hon. Gentleman's policy, if put into operation, is government by force without the assent of the people. The alternative is government by the people for the people. That is the reason why people of all parties have grasped that principle almost with unanimity. The views conscientiously expressed by the right hon. Gentleman have been discarded, and in this House practical unanimity is found for the views of the Government and the principles that the Round Table Conference put forth.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The right hon. Gentleman has been most courteous in giving way to me. I only wish to say that when he tries to fix on me the odium of wishing to settle these matters by force, when I am criticising the policy which he and his friends are pursuing, I must remind him of the admission made across the Floor to-night that 60,000 persons are in gaol in India to-day.

Mr. BENN: I am coming to that in a moment and to my own feelings about it. The right hon. Gentleman's policy, in fact, is condemned on four grounds. In the first place, it is blankly defiant of the pledges that have been made to India; secondly you cannot practically base Government upon it; thirdly you cannot morally base government upon it because it lacks the assent of the governed, and fourthly, it means government by force which public opinion in this country would not stand. As against the right hon. Gentleman's policy there is the policy which I would call the Parliament plan, that is to say the plan which is the outcome of this Conference to which not only Members of His Majesty's Government but members of the other parties were party. The work of Conference has been embodied in the Resolution which appears in the Blue Book saying that certain agreement had been reached and that much work remains to be done. The agreements that have been reached really amount to three. It presents as it were, a triangular view. On the part of British India it is an understanding that, in the interests of India, and for some time to

come, British service will be enlisted in order to help India to establish an efficient and sound form of self-government. On the part of the Princes, it is an underaking, rather more solid than the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon) imagines, to enter into federation. On the part of the Parliament men, it is an undertaking, always provisional and on condition that the picture should be completed, that this Parliament would confer upon the Government of India central and local responsibility.

Sir S. HOARE: I do not wish to interrupt, but I tried to make the position of my party clear, and I am afraid I cannot agree with the right hon. Gentleman's interpretation of those principles.

Mr. BENN: I certainly do not wish to push the right hon. Gentleman further. I am not in the least entitled to speak for him. I think he will agree that I am not attempting to go one inch beyond anything he said. When I say safeguards, federation, responsibility I have covered the three sides of the triagle. Those are the three points I tried to make.

Sir S. HOARE: I do not wish to get into an argument with the right hon. Gentleman, but I would ask him not to go any further than the speech which I made this afternoon.

Mr. BENN: I certainly could not do better even if I were entitled to do so than take as a statement of his case the graceful and helpful speech which the right hon. Gentleman himself made this afternoon. But those are the three aspects of the agreement which has been reached and when the Leader of the Opposition says, "We are going to work for a federal India" I would remind him that he cannot have a federal India without giving responsibility at the centre. The Princes will not be willing to enter into a federation, as was made perfectly clear, unless you confer responsibility at the centre. They will not federate with an irresponsible or autocratic British India. Therefore, when we all work together, as we all desire to work together, in all parts of the House for a federation of India, it must be a federation of India in which the principle of responsibility is included.

It has been said that what has been done is only the sketching of an outline. The Chairman of the Statutory Commission was quite correct when he said that it is only the sketching of an outline, but it is an outline that has to be filled in and not one that has to be rubbed out, and, secondly, it is an outline to the design of which much previous labour has gone. On this occasion, which indeed marks an epoch in the history of India, one thinks of many acts of foresight and of significant courage. I think naturally of the name of Mr. Edwin Montagu, who 13 years ago laid the foundations of this part of our movement. His work, it must be remembered, just as the work of the Statutory Commission, made possible the rapid passage in committees of the Conference of many of the decisions which were arrived at in the reports of those committees, but there are others to be remembered too. There is Sir Sankaran Nair's Committee, the all-India Parties Committee in India, if which Sir Tej Sapru was a member, and especially the decisions which were come to prior to their arrival in this country by the Princes, which alone made the special solution which is at present holding the field possible.

But if much has been done, much remains to be done. There again the right hon. and learned Member for Spen Valley was quite true. There are many questions that are unsettled, many parts of the design that are incomplete—not unthought of, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman suggested, but incomplete—the proportions of the central body, the character of the executive, the nature of its stability, and above all, and most important of all, the protection which is to be accorded to minorities, because, eager as we are to see the constitution in working, we are no less eager to ensure that it shall come into being with general good will. But though much remains to be done, we may say, I think with justice, that something has been achieved.

First, I should say that the happy result of the Conference has improved the prestige of Great Britain in the world, and I would like to read three extracts to support this contention. The first is from the "Times" correspondent in New York, printed the day after the Conference closed. I am not quoting this as

[Mr. Benn.]

support for a party, but as approval of the action taken by Parliament on all sides. This is what the "Times" correspondent in New York said:

"It is probably not too much to say that with the publication of the results of the Conference to-day opinion in this country is more kindly disposed towards the policy of the British Government in India than it has been for many years."

That is a tribute which a statesman would not treat with disdain. Let me quote from the "Journal de Genêve":

"In eliminating from the long list of its cares the greatest among them, in avoiding in India the difficulties of the state of war which existed in Ireland for so long, Mr. MacDonald has rendered eminent service not to one country only but to all Europe."

Or again a comment by the "Times" correspondent at Geneva, in which he says:

"There is a good deal of friendly comment by many Foreign Ministers. It is commonly remarked that any agreement that contributes to appeasement in one part of the world is likely nowadays to have beneficial repercussions elsewhere."

I do not over-estimate the importance of these messages, but I say that if it is true that the prestige of Great Britain—not of one party, but of Great Britain—is raised in the world, it increases her power for usefulness. The second gain of the Conference is that we can no longer talk of two Indias. We must talk of one India, a Greater India and a Federated India, an India comprising Princes and Provinces, and we can speak of an India so federated that within the British Commonwealth she will occupy a position of power comparable to that of the other great Oriental countries. A third gain is the settlement of the question of the status of Indians. The very moment we sat down together as equals and talked the matter over the question was virtually settled. The moment the Prime Minister made his statement of 19th January, which compares, as the hon. Member for South Derbyshire (Major Pole) said, strikingly with the declaration in the Parliament Act of 1919, the equality of status of India was declared—from the Indian point of view a great gain. A further gain was the improvement of the relations between this country and India, and I speak first of all of commercial relations. It is perceptible—not great yet, but perceptible. Trade between this country and India is as important to India as to this country. There are no two countries which stand in truer relations of mutuality. You cannot sell goods otherwise. The term good will is a term which in trade is peculiarly significant and it depends upon national good will.

Much more than that we have done something, and I think it is one of the greatest gains of the Conference, to re-establish political understanding and goodwill between the two peoples. They came here risking their political life amid the warnings and even the reproaches of their fellow countrymen. They risked it because of their love for their own land, and they go back happy, for, as one of their spokesmen said, they came with misgivings and they go back with a wealth of confidence and trust. Is it anything but a gain that we should, after the unhappy years to which I have referred, and which must be a source of shame to any responsible Government, be beginning to re-establish understanding and trust between the peoples? Best of all there was direct contact between the Indian people and the representatives of Parliament. That I count as one of the greatest gains of the Conference. When you think of the village and the district, the district and the Province, the Province and the Centre, and the Centre and Whitehall—all of these obstacles interposed between the Indian and the persons, that is, ourselves, who are supposed to be responsible for their government, you can understand what a great thing it was that they should meet face to face the representatives of the British Parliament in order to talk over and discuss and decide the problems that confront them. As the Prime Minister stated at the end of the Conference, it is the fixed policy of the Government that this contact should not only be continued but should be extended. We ought never to lose contact with these men and women who came here and rendered great service to their country, but we may also hope to extend the contact so as to associate those who, though great leaders in their own country, failed when invited to come forward and give us their advice.

For the future, in our judgment, two things are necessary. One thing is sincerity, and the second is speed. One of the effects of the Conference is that we have begun to re-establish the tender plant of understanding and trust. Newspapers which at first treated the Con-

ference with contempt and even opprobrium, passed on to reporting it, and from reporting it to interest, and from interest to careful examination. By continuing the work of the Conference we shall foster this plant of understanding and trust. For that purpose speed is necessary. What can be gained by delay? If India is not fitted for self-government yet, she will not be fitted for it if we wait for 10 or 20 years. If India is fitted for self-government, she is fitted for it at the earliest moment. Delay has been a tragedy in the past. Had we known how to act in time, we might have saved ourselves of some of the things of which the right hon. Gentleman complained. Thirty years ago men who to-day are opposing us in India were firm advocates of the British connection.

Mr. CHURCHILL: In what respect?

Mr. BENN: Gandhi was a stretcher bearer in the South African War, and it was his influence which got us a large contribution in money and endless troops. There is no tragedy like delay, and that is why I say that it will require not only sincerity, but speed. Suppose that by the labours of all parties in the House something is done; suppose that we succeed in building up a constitution, not a sealed and delivered pattern on the English model, but something unique, moulded according to the tradition and spirit of the Indian people, and resting on their good will. If we can succeed in that, if all parties can succeed in that, we shall have done something to discharge the true mission of the British commonwealth, which is to extend the area of peace and contentment in the world among free peoples.

Captain CROOKSHANK: In the few minutes that remain I want to put in a caveat as a Member of this House who has no knowledge of India at all, but who has heard the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and considers that the position of every Member of this House is jeopardised by what he has said. Early in his speech, he said that the Government or Parliament must impose responsible government on India, because it has been impossible in this House for the Secretary of State or anyone to bear that responsibility. This House and this country have been responsible for the government of India for many years, and one would not have expected to hear the present Secretary of State make the statement that, because it was so difficult to explain to Members of this House the railway position, or the commercial position, or the financial position, we must impose responsible government on India. It may be right to give responsible government to India; that is another story. But as a Member of this House, I object to the right hon. Gentleman saying that we have to do it on those grounds.

He also said that we are compelled to give self-government to India. There is no compulsion about it. If this country in its wisdom decides that a portion of self-government must be given to that part of the Empire, so let it be, but do not let it go out that there is any compulsion, and that the Government of to-day have been blackmailed into that position. [*Interruption.*] That is the only reasonable interpretation that can be put upon the words of the Secretary of State. He also said that events are moving so fast that even he does not know what happened 10 weeks ago, and that we have to keep running in order to catch up. Again, as a Member of this House, I object to that statement being made by the Government spokesman. It makes me think of the story of the motorist who was trying to find his way, shall we say, to Dundee, and was told by a yokel that it was 10 miles. Having gone about 10 miles, he asked the next man how far, and he said that it was another 10 miles. Then the motorist said, "Thank God, we are keeping up." That is the position of the right hon. Gentleman. He says that we cannot keep up because the situation is moving so fast. It is for this House to plan its policy, to deliberate about it, and to settle it, and not for the Government to come here and say——

It being Eleven of the Clock, the Motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed without question put.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL.

Order for Second Reading read and discharged; and Bill withdrawn.

The remaining Orders were read, and postponed.

ADJOURNMENT.

Resolved, "That this House do now adjourn."—[*Mr. Parkinson.*]

Adjourned accordingly at Three Minutes after Eleven o'Clock.